

THE STRAITS TIMES

World

Arctic-like cold paralyzes US Midwest **A26**



Life Shock for restaurant in The Bachelor **D6**



Home Questions over new SAF safety body: Experts **B1**



Opinion Is plastic bag, straw ban effective? **A30**



Top of the News
New CEO picked for A*Star **A10**



US, China confident of reaching a trade deal before deadline

Big progress made on thorny issues; Trump says he will meet Xi to seal an agreement

Charissa Yong
US Correspondent
In Washington
and Danson Cheong
China Correspondent
In Beijing

The United States and China are optimistic about the progress made in the high-level trade talks in Washington which ended on Thursday, raising hopes that despite the need for more work, a deal to end their trade war could be reached before stiffer tariffs kick in on March 2.

US President Donald Trump said he would meet Chinese President Xi Jinping, potentially more than once, to seal a deal.

Mr Trump added that he could combine it with his trip to meet North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in end-February.

"Tremendous progress" had been made on the thorny issue of forced technology transfers, said Mr Trump, who welcomed China's purchase of five million tonnes of soya beans as a sign of good faith.

Beijing likewise welcomed the "important progress" made, saying that the talks were frank, specific and constructive.

Both sides had set a timeline and road map for the next step of talks, state news agency Xinhua said af-

ter the talks ended on Thursday.

They also appeared to have made progress on the key US concern of enforcement of any deal, with US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer telling reporters before a closed-door meeting with Chinese Vice-Premier Liu He: "Both sides agree this agreement is worth nothing without enforcement."

Xinhua also reported that both sides agreed on the importance of constructing a two-way mechanism for implementing the deal, which will help ensure the measures from the talks are put in place and effective.

The two-day talks covered a wide range of issues, including ways in which US firms are pressured to transfer technology to Chinese companies, the need for stronger protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights in China, and the harm resulting from China's cyber theft of US commercial property, the White House said in a statement.

It also cited, among others, barriers US firms face in China and the need to remove market barriers and tariffs that limit US sales of manufactured goods, services and agriculture to China. "The purchase of US products by China from our farmers, ranchers, manufacturers and businesses is a critical part of the negotiations," said the White House.

Mr Trump said there had been no

talk of extending the March 1 deadline for an agreement, failing which the US would raise tariffs from 10 per cent to 25 per cent on US\$200 billion (\$\$270 billion) worth of Chinese goods on March 2.

"We are going to have a great trade deal with China if it all works out... It is going to be great for both countries," he told reporters before a closed-door meeting with Mr Liu, who led the China delegation.

Mr Liu delivered a letter from Mr Xi to Mr Trump, in which the Chinese leader said he hoped both sides would continue to act in a spirit of mutual respect and win-win cooperation, and meet each other halfway for an early deal that was in both their interests.

The Chinese proposed a Trump-Xi meeting in the southern Chinese island of Hainan, The Wall Street Journal reported.

Mr Lighthizer and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin will head to Beijing early this month.

Milken Institute Centre for Regional Economics' executive director Kevin Klownden told The Straits Times that a more tangible agreement, with very clear deliverables which China finds acceptable, could come next. "There is going to be a major push by the White House in the meanwhile to come up with language that both sides can agree to when they meet in person."

charyong@sph.com.sg
dansonc@sph.com.sg

SEE TOP OF THE NEWS A8



TNP FILE PHOTO

ACCUSED IN HIV DATA LEAK TRACED

"I just got fired because of all these press releases... I am living out of my car right now, so when you see my car, you are going to see all my stuff in it. I am homeless, and I am jobless too."

MIKHAY FARRERA BROCHEZ, the American at the centre of the HIV data breach, speaking by phone to The Straits Times
US Bureau Chief Nirmal Ghosh on Thursday. **SEE TOP OF THE NEWS A4&6**

Crematorium workers probed over red packets

Mandai Crematorium workers who received red packets from bereaved families, and funeral directors who helped convey such red packets to them, are the subjects of a Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau probe.

Checks by The Straits Times

found at least three workers from different companies were called in for questioning by the CPIB this week, while another two were questioned as witnesses. The three were later released on bail.

SEE TOP OF THE NEWS A10

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10 must-reads for today

1 End to war on the cards?
A formal end to the Korean War could be on the cards of a second summit between United States President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un planned for this month, Mr Trump's special envoy has indicated. Mr Stephen Biegun also revealed that Mr Kim has committed to dismantling and destroying the North's nuclear enrichment facilities.
WORLD A14



South Korean soldiers (left) being greeted by North Korean soldiers in Cheorwon county before crossing the Military Demarcation Line last December to inspect a dismantled North Korean guard post inside the Demilitarised Zone dividing the two Koreas. PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

2 US, China upbeat about deal
The United States and China were upbeat about the progress of their trade negotiations after high-level talks this week, with only a month to go before the US ratchets up tariffs on Chinese goods. President Donald Trump said he would meet Chinese President Xi Jinping to seal a deal, possibly after his summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. **TOP OF THE NEWS A1**

3 Electoral division change
Pedra Branca, located about 40km east of Singapore's main island, has been included in the electoral division of East Coast. The Elections Department said in a statement that Singapore's voter rolls are being updated and will be open for public inspection towards the end of this month.
TOP OF THE NEWS A9

4 Populist budget in India
India's government pledged 750 billion rupees (\$14.2 billion) to support poor farmers and reduced the tax burden for the middle class yesterday, as it looked to rally support from voters with the final budget before a general election that must be held by May.
WORLD A16

5 Plastic poser for Singapore
How environmentally effective is the growing push to forgo plastic bags and straws? Cost-benefit analysis shows that managing plastic and other waste is a more complex matter than meets the eye. Economics experts Euston Quah and Christabelle Soh explain.
OPINION A30

6 Protecting kids in divorce
There is now a new measure to prevent children from being taken out of the country when their parents' marriage breaks down. A Stop Order by the Family Justice Court can prevent heartbreaking cases of children being spirited away and one parent having to go to great lengths to see them again.
HOME B2

7 Gojek driver in viral video
A Gojek driver took a video of a heated exchange with a passenger who accused him of kidnapping her after a dispute over the route from Bishan to the city. In the seven-minute clip, which went viral after it was uploaded on Facebook, the passenger gets upset as the driver tries to find a police station to try to settle the matter.
HOME B5

8 Bonanza for condo projects
The upcoming first phase of the Cross Island Line seems to be a bonanza for some condominium projects near the proposed stations. Affinity at Serangoon and The Garden Residences have seen a spike in buying interest since details of the new line were announced last week. **BUSINESS C1**

9 More than just a swimmer
Para-swimmer and ST Athlete of the Year nominee Toh Wei Soong may be a Commonwealth Games medallist and double Asian Para Games champion. But he feels that his work outside the pool, such as in schools outreach and social causes, is more important. **SPORT C11**

10 Creating space for guests
Learn how a couple turned their four-bedroom apartment into a two-bedder to suit their lifestyle of entertaining guests and having more space for relaxation. **LIFE D4**



The dining counter, when paired with the dining table, forms a continuous surface for food preparation and dining. PHOTO: SPH MAGAZINES

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PODCAST

Life Picks

In this episode, we pick our favourite works from the iLight festival, which runs until Feb 24, and recommend a special Valentine's Day outing with singer Craig David at Zouk.
<http://str.sg/lifepicks20>



VIDEO

Bachelor fiasco

The Jan 28 episode of The Bachelor, in which contestants were flown to Singapore, has been criticised for perpetuating stereotypes about Asian food. Here is more about the incident. <http://str.sg/ewww>

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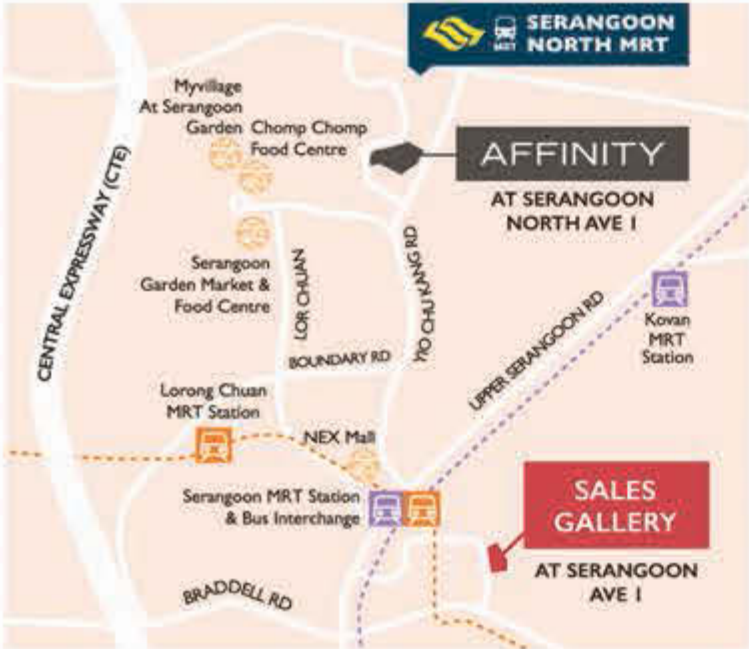
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American at centre of HIV data leak traced to Kentucky

ST speaks to him in a series of short phone calls from the airport

Nirmal Ghosh
US Bureau Chief
In Lexington (Kentucky)

The American at the centre of the data leak from Singapore's HIV Registry has been traced to the city of Lexington in the southern American state of Kentucky, where the 34-year-old said he is currently homeless and jobless.

Speaking to The Straits Times over the phone on Thursday afternoon US time, Mikhy Farrera Brochez protested his innocence, saying recent reports about him were "terribly nasty and inaccurate".

He also said that the news about him had cost him his job.

"I just got fired from my job just now. I just got out of work, and I just got fired because of all these press releases," he said.

He did not say what he did for a living, only that it is "the only job that I have".

He added: "I am living out of my car right now, so when you see my car, you are going to see all my stuff in it. I am homeless, and I am jobless too."

The Straits Times tracked Brochez to Lexington in Kentucky. In December, he was arrested in the nearby town of Winchester on charges of trespassing on his mother's home there.

No one answered the door at his Lexington address listed in Kentucky court documents.

But The Straits Times spoke to him in a series of short phone calls made from Blue Grass Airport near Lexington.

At one point, he agreed to a meeting, saying he would go to the airport and pick up The Straits Times reporter and show evidence relevant to the case. "I will take you to the library to copy some papers for you," he said.

But he subsequently cancelled this, claiming a US Federal Bureau of Investigation agent had advised him not to speak.

He also claimed that he had attempted to contact "Singaporean officials" to locate his property and find his husband, Singaporean doctor Ler Teck Siang.

Brochez said: "I haven't heard from him in six months. All I know is that the Singaporeans won't release any information to me or the American embassy... We don't know where he is. We can't find him."

On Monday, he and Ler were identified by the Singapore Ministry of Health (MOH) as the key players behind the leak of personal information of 14,200 people with HIV.

The 37-year-old Ler, who was the head of MOH's National Public Health Unit from March 2012 to May 2013, had downloaded confidential information from the HIV Registry that ended up in Brochez's hands.

MOH said on Monday that the American subsequently leaked the information online.

While Brochez on Thursday did not explicitly deny leaking the information, he said: "You are aware of the allegations that are being made



American Mikhy Farrera Brochez's address in the Kentucky court documents led to this house in the city of Lexington. No one answered the door when The Straits Times went there on Thursday. He agreed over the phone to a meeting with the journalist, but later backed out. PHOTO: CLARY ESTES FOR THE STRAITS TIMES



Brochez was arrested in December last year in the small Kentucky town of Winchester for trespassing. He is currently out on bail. PHOTO: CLARK COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

against me that I have breached the data of thousands of people? Have you seen any post online that I have done this?"

FORGED CERTIFICATES, BLOOD SWOPS

The American moved to Singapore in 2008 after meeting Ler online and in Hong Kong in 2007. He worked as a lecturer on an Employment Pass, but investigations later revealed that his various educational certificates were forged.

On two occasions – in 2008 and again in 2013 – the HIV-positive American used Ler's blood to get HIV-negative test results, which he submitted to the authorities to get an Employment Pass.

In March 2017, Brochez was jailed 28 months for offences including cheating, lying to a public servant, possessing drugs and using forged educational certificates.

He was deported after his jail term ended in April last year.

Ler was charged in 2016 with offences under the Penal Code and Official Secrets Act (OSA) for failing to take reasonable care of confidential

information regarding HIV-positive patients.

He was convicted in September last year of abetting the American to cheat and of providing false information to the police and MOH. He has appealed against the conviction and sentence.

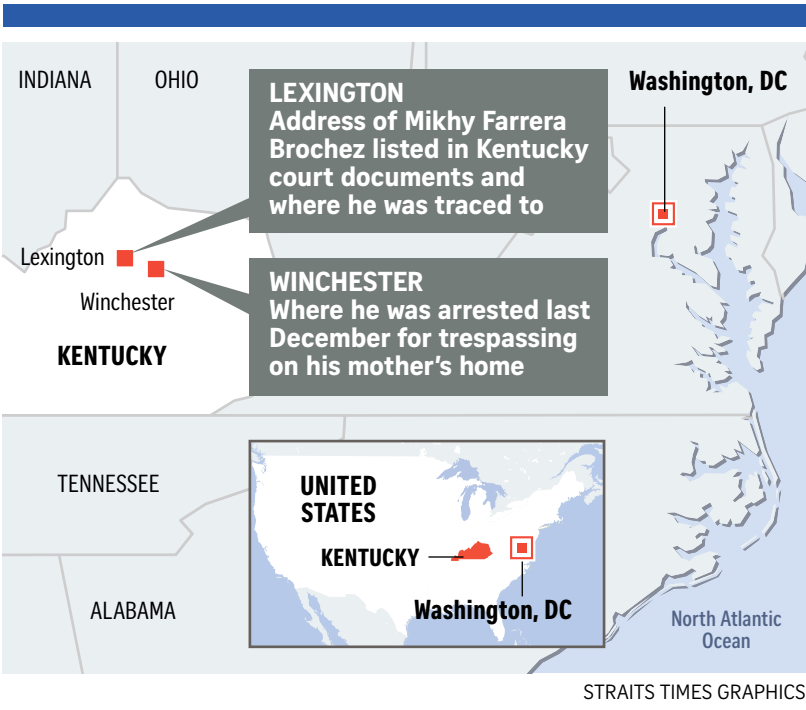
His OSA trial date has not been fixed, but it has since emerged that he faces separate drug charges that will be heard in May.

No charges have been filed against Brochez in relation to the leak so far, although the Singapore police said on Monday that they are seeking the help of foreign counterparts in investigations.

SMALL TOWN IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The data leak – which has made global headlines – has turned the spotlight on the small Kentucky town of Winchester, where Brochez was arrested in December last year for trespassing. He is currently out on bail.

When The Straits Times visited the court there on Thursday to get details of Brochez's arrest, an official who had heard about the case



said: "We are a small town, stuff like this doesn't happen."

Winchester, half an hour's drive east of the northern Kentucky city

of Lexington, is home to about 18,000 people.

Mr Justin Gurley, a deputy in the Clark County Sheriff's Office who

had responded to a call from Brochez's mother about her son trespassing on her property nearly two months ago, had no idea that the encounter would result in him being besieged by calls from media organisations trying to find out more about Brochez.

Mr Gurley said that on Dec 8, when he turned up at Ms Teresa King's house – a double-storey house set among rolling pastures in what is horse and cattle country – Brochez did not resist arrest.

According to court documents, Ms King called the police because her son was banging on her front door in the morning.

When the police arrived, he was sitting on the porch. Ms King told the police she did not want him on the property, and he was arrested after refusing to leave.

When The Straits Times asked Brochez about the arrest on Thursday, the line abruptly went dead.

nirmal@sph.com.sg

• Additional reporting by Fabian Koh in Singapore



Downtown Winchester (above) and the Sheriff's Department (left) in the American town. The data leak – which has made global headlines – has turned the spotlight on this small town in Kentucky where Brochez was arrested last December for trespassing on his mother's property (above, right), a double-storey house set among rolling pastures. His mother had called the police because her son was banging on her front door in the morning. PHOTOS: CLARY ESTES FOR THE STRAITS TIMES, NIRMAL GHOSH



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Insurance firms here promise not to use leaked HIV data

People on the HIV Registry need not fear their coverage will be affected in any way

Salma Khalik
Senior Health Correspondent

Insurance companies in Singapore have promised not to use any of the leaked information on more than 14,000 people with HIV “for any purpose whatsoever”.

The Life Insurance Association (LIA) issued a statement yesterday assuring policyholders that insurers will not seek any of the leaked data, meaning that people on the HIV Registry whose data was leaked need not fear their life or health insurance coverage will be compromised in any way.

It added: “Should the information related to this incident be intentionally sent to life insurers, life insurers will not use the data and will inform the relevant authorities immediately.”

The names and contact details of 14,200 people, both locals and foreigners, on the HIV Registry were stolen from the Ministry of Health (MOH) between March 2012 and May 2016. The information was made public last month and later blocked. However, there is nothing

to stop the person who leaked the information online from publishing the information again.

About 3,500 Singaporeans and permanent residents who were on the registry up to 2013 are still alive.

The Singaporean doctor who took the information from the ministry, Ler Teck Siang, has been charged under the Official Secrets Act. He also faces charges for falsifying his husband’s blood test, as well as for drug trafficking.

The confidential information of

people diagnosed here with HIV was released on the Internet by his husband, American Mikhy Farrera Brochez, who was deported from Singapore last year after serving more than two years in jail for falsifying his blood test. The two men had got married in the United States.

Brochez had HIV, but in order to get an Employment Pass, needed a clean record. Ler, who is a doctor, used his blood for Brochez’s test.

The LIA reiterated that no one will be discriminated against as a re-

sult of the leak. It said that it noted the concerns “affected individuals may have in relation to any potential impact on their life or health insurance policies”.

It added: “It is our goal to ensure that all our policyholders are treated fairly. Policyholders should be assured that life insurers will not unreasonably reject a claim or void a policy.”

While approving what the insurance companies here are doing, Dr Roy Chan, founding president of Action for Aids (Singapore), said people living with HIV “are rarely able to purchase health or life insurance”.

The exception is MediShield Life, the government-run health insurance that covers everyone, even those with pre-existing diseases, for life. However, Dr Chan, a former head of the National Skin Centre, said he was “happy to hear that LIA will not condone the use of misappropriated personal data”.

salma@sph.com.sg



The National Public Health Unit (NPHU), which was located at 142 Moulmein Road, has since been renamed the National Public Health and Epidemiology Unit. LIANHE ZAOBAO FILE PHOTO

Ad for health unit head in 2011 required 2 years’ clinical experience

Rei Kurohi

When the National Public Health Unit (NPHU) put out an advertisement for a new head medical officer in October 2011, there were two qualifications required.

Applicants needed to have a basic medical degree with at least a conditional registration with the Singapore Medical Council, and two years of clinical experience.

The advertisement published in The Straits Times described the role: “In this position, you are responsible for monitoring and reporting on the human immunodeficiency virus epidemic in Singapore, as well as the analysis of HIV transmission patterns.

“You will also review existing HIV surveillance systems and propose the implementation of new ones, where necessary.

“In addition, you are required to oversee the HIV contact tracing and partner notification programme.”

The advertisement also said that the unit maintained the national HIV Registry.

The doctor who is at the centre of the HIV Registry leak, Ler Teck Siang, took on the position in March 2012.

Then 30, he had been a doctor for nearly seven years, having graduated from the National University of Singapore in 2005. He remained the unit’s head until May 2013.

According to an UNAids report, the NPHU was set up by the Ministry of Health (MOH) in September 2008 under its Communicable Diseases Division in order

to enhance the surveillance and control of HIV.

A spokesman for MOH said that the unit was responsible for carrying out public health measures such as data analysis, contact tracing and the enforcement of legal orders under the Infectious Diseases Act.

According to MOH, there were 11 employees under Ler when he was the unit’s head in 2013.

The NPHU, which was located at 142 Moulmein Road beside the old Communicable Disease Centre, has since been renamed the National Public Health and Epidemiology Unit (NPHEU). It is now part of the new National Centre for Infectious Diseases located opposite Tan Tock Seng Hospital.

“The NPHEU provides data management and epidemiological analysis to strengthen evidence-based public health practices for infectious diseases of public health importance,” said MOH.

Some of these infectious diseases include HIV, tuberculosis and sexually transmitted infections. MOH said that the HIV Registry is the only such registry under the NPHEU. It is unclear whether similar registries exist for other diseases.

The ministry added: “NPHEU works with MOH, other governmental agencies as well as healthcare professionals and institutions to ensure data accuracy and completeness in the HIV Registry.

“The data managed by NPHEU can be accessed only by selected NPHEU staff and is governed by stringent access controls.”

In addition to the former NPHU’s



Ler Teck Siang, the doctor at the centre of the leak, took on the job of NPHU head in March 2012. Then 30, he had been a doctor for nearly seven years.

11

Number of staff under Ler Teck Siang when he was head of the NPHU in 2013, according to MOH.

functions, the NPHEU also has expanded functions, such as managing the national surveillance programme for emerging infectious diseases and providing recommendations to support national strategies for preventing and controlling communicable diseases, MOH said.

rei@sph.com.sg

33 foreigners caught trying to get work pass with forged certs

Fabian Koh

A total of 33 foreigners were caught for submitting forged certificates in connection with work pass applications between 2016 and last year, the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) said yesterday.

They were either prosecuted or given stern warnings, added MOM, without giving a breakdown.

Mikhy Farrera Brochez, the man at the centre of Singapore’s HIV Registry leak, had used forged university degrees to get jobs at Temasek Polytechnic (TP) and Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) between 2009 and 2012, in what the Ministry of Education (MOE) calls “an isolated case”.

“The great majority of applicants for positions at our education institutions are good people earnest in wanting to teach. Nonetheless, this serves as a reminder for all organisations to be more careful during recruitment,” an MOE spokesman said in response to queries from The Straits Times.

From February 2009 to January 2011, Brochez was a lecturer in psychology and early childhood subjects at TP before leaving after his contract expired. He then worked as an adjunct lecturer with the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at NP from June 2011 to April 2012.

The two polytechnics said they have since beefed up their hiring practices by conducting more thorough background checks for potential new employees.

According to an MOM spokesman, submitting forged academic certificates breaches the Employment of Foreign Manpower Act, and anyone found guilty can be fined up to \$20,000 and jailed for up to two years.

Lawyers said it can be considered cheating and forgery under the Penal Code. Mr Ashwin Ganapathy, a lawyer at IRB Law, said: “The decision as to what charge to prefer against the individual is purely up to the AGC (Attorney-General’s Chambers). The Attorney-General has the sole discretion on who to charge and under which section to charge them.”

Criminal lawyer Rajan Supramaniam, managing director of Hilborne Law, said: “I have handled about 20 to 25 cases within the last three to five years. This is because there is an influx of foreigners, and some of them are desperate to secure jobs.”

Responding to queries from The Straits Times, TP and NP said they had checked copies of the certificates submitted by Brochez when he applied for the jobs with the allegedly original copies he later presented. “Based on the documents that Brochez submitted in his job application in 2008, he met the job requirements,” said the TP spokesman.

The ruse came to light when the two schools were alerted by police in 2016, that the educational certificates submitted by Brochez were forged. Both polytechnics have since introduced an additional step of verifying submitted educational certificates from potential hires with the admissions office of the issuing universities, along with contacting former employers.

Human resource specialists stressed the need for stringent background checks for potential employees. Mr Alvin Ang, managing director of recruitment firm Quantum Leap Career Consultants, called the oversight by TP and NP “a serious breach of professional ethics”. He said: “You are hiring him as a lecturer. The academic aspect of his degree is the most important part, so how could you miss that out?”

Background checks typically start with contacting the last two to three employers, along with personal referees provided, said Ms Wendy Baker, business development and engagement partner of talent consulting firm ICE Asia. The next level includes “criminal record checks, financial checks such as bankruptcies or credit checks, and increasingly, social media checks”.

However, HR practitioners said there may be difficulties in conducting checks on foreign applicants as local HR officers may not be familiar with the certificates and how reputable the schools are in the home country.

fabkoh@sph.com.sg

TIMELY REMINDER

The great majority of applicants for positions at our education institutions are good people earnest in wanting to teach. Nonetheless, this serves as a reminder for all organisations to be more careful during recruitment.



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US President Donald Trump meeting Chinese Vice-Premier Liu He in the Oval Office of the White House on Thursday. Before the meeting, Mr Trump had told reporters that he intended to meet Chinese President Xi Jinping soon to finalise a deal. PHOTO: REUTERS



Increased optimism on US-China talks: Experts

They cite positive signs such as Trump's meeting with China V-P, road map for next round of talks

Danson Cheong
China Correspondent
In Beijing

The United States and China are getting closer towards reaching a possible trade deal, and experts said they are increasingly optimistic such an outcome will be reached before the end of the trade war truce on March 1.

Both sides concluded two days of trade negotiations in Washington on Thursday and, in public statements on the closed-door meetings, hailed progress made on issues including protection of intellectual property rights, the trade deficit and forced technology transfers.

This was a marked departure from previous official-level talks in Beijing last month, when the brief Chinese statement on the talks failed to mention these long-time American concerns, said Dr Wang Huiyao, president of the Beijing-based Centre for China and Globalisation think-tank.

The outcome from this round of discussions was better than ex-

pected, he said, pointing to the fact that US President Donald Trump had personally met Chinese Vice-Premier Liu He on the final day of negotiations.

Dr Wang said: "They discussed the next step of negotiations in Beijing, and Mr Trump also said that both he and (Chinese President Xi Jinping) want to sign the final deal. The fact that there is a road map for future talks is a big development."

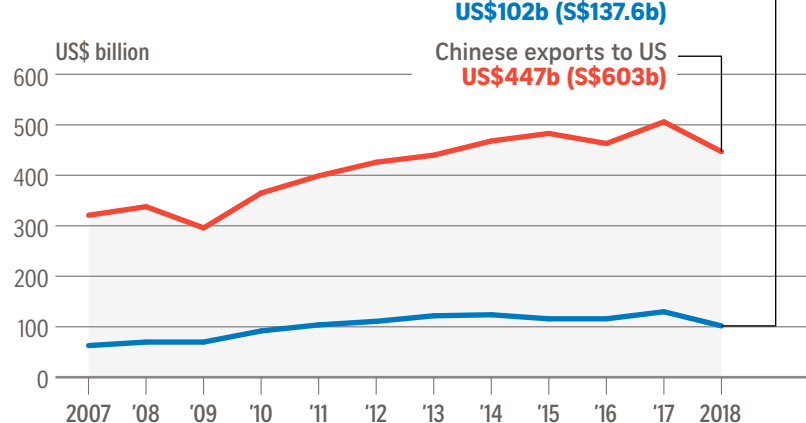
Before his meeting with Mr Liu, Mr Trump had told reporters that he intended to meet Mr Xi soon to finalise a deal. Mr Liu, who had led the Chinese delegation to Washington, also told Mr Trump that China would buy an additional five million tonnes of American soya beans.

The clock is ticking on the 90-day trade war truce brokered by Mr Trump and Mr Xi in Argentina last December. A deal must be reached by March 1, failing which the US will impose heightened tariffs on US\$200 billion (S\$270 billion) worth of Chinese imports.

One key US concern is that Beijing sticks to any agreed deal – US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer had mentioned the enforcement of any deal repeatedly in comments to the media on Thursday.

This was a significant issue, said Mr Kevin Klwoden, executive director of the Milken Institute's Centre for Regional Economics.

US-China trade



NOTE: Converted values as at Feb 1, 2019.

Source: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE STRAITS TIMES GRAPHICS

He added that both sides will come to a "more tangible agreement with very clear deliverables that China still finds acceptable".

The most critical discussions still lie ahead, said Professor Zhu Feng, director of Nanjing University's Institute of International Studies.

Structural issues, including Beijing's subsidies to state-owned enterprises and forced technology transfers that the Americans have long complained about, will be addressed in the next round of negotiations, Prof Zhu said. "The current trend is positive, but both sides

need to give a little," he said.

It was a point the state-run China Daily tried to hammer home in an editorial yesterday, even as it lauded progress made in the talks. "Having come this far towards meeting each other halfway, it would undo all the good work that has been done to build trust and make practical progress, not to go the extra mile to clear the final hurdles," it wrote.

dansonc@sph.com.sg

• Additional reporting by Charissa Yong

MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL

There are some points that we don't agree to yet, but I think we will agree. I think, when President Xi (Jinping) and myself meet, every point will be agreed to. We are going to have a great trade deal with China if it all works out... It is going to be great for both countries – not just us, not just them.



U.S. PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP

WORKING TOWARDS AN EARLY AGREEMENT

I hope our two sides will continue to act in a spirit of mutual respect and win-win cooperation, and step up consultations by meeting each other halfway in order to reach an early agreement that works for the interests of both sides. Such an agreement will send a positive signal to our two peoples and the broader international community. It will serve to ensure healthy development of China-US relations and contribute to steady growth of the world economy.



CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING, in a letter to Mr Trump delivered by Chinese Vice-Premier Liu He.

Instant cost savings as mega EU-Japan trade deal takes effect

Walter Sim
Japan Correspondent
In Tokyo

The world's largest free trade deal – between Japan and the European Union – took effect yesterday, with consumers in both markets instantly enjoying cost savings on an array of imported goods from European wines to Japanese beef.

The Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), covering 27.8 per cent of the world economy and 36.9 per cent of global trade in a market of 635 million people, comes amid protectionist pushback on the global free trade order.

Britain, which will lose the perks of the EPA when it leaves the EU next month, is keen to join the 11-nation revised Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) pact that took effect on Dec 30 last year.

"Europe and Japan are sending a

message to the world about the future of open and fair trade," European Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker said in a statement.

"More than anything, our agreement shows that trade is about more than quotas and tariffs, or millions and billions. It is about values, principles and fairness."

Under the deal dubbed by European media as "cars for cheese", Japan will eventually scrap tariffs on about 94 per cent of imported products from the EU, while the EU will remove duties on 99 per cent of imported Japanese goods. It also folds in Paris climate deal commitments, while urging two-way business investments and ensuring the protection of intellectual property rights.

The EPA, along with the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, is expected to boost Japan's economy by an estimated 13 trillion yen (S\$161 billion) and create 750,000 jobs. "We



Supermarkets like this one in Chiba, near Tokyo, have already cut prices on imported wines from the European Union. With the trade deal, European consumers can enjoy cheaper Japanese products such as sake and beef. PHOTO: EPA-EFE

expect the EPA and the TPP-II to be new engines of growth for the Japanese economy," Economic Revitalisation Minister Toshimitsu Motegi said yesterday.

Japanese supermarkets such as Aeon and Seijo Ishii have already cut prices on imported wines from

the EU, home to major wine producers like France and Italy. European wines have lost ground to Chilean imports in recent years, thanks to a bilateral free trade deal between Japan and Chile.

Meanwhile, European consumers can enjoy cheaper Japanese prod-

ucts from beef to green tea and seafood to sake, with the removal of duties overnight. Tariffs on imported Japanese cars will gradually be cut to zero over eight years.

Japanese duties on imported European cheese, chocolates and bags will also see steady reductions.

Cattle farmer Kazuyoshi Mori-moto, from Hyogo prefecture west of Osaka, told NHK that he sees "an opportunity for more people to enjoy Kobe beef in Europe".

Some Japanese farms are concerned that the promise of cheaper European imports will hit demand for their products.

The government, in turn, will assiduously continue to address these worries by helping such small and medium-sized enterprises boost their productivity and grow their potential for exports, Economy Minister Hiroshige Seko said.

Mr Yoshimitsu Kobayashi, chairman of the Japan Association of Corporate Executives, said the EPA will boost the competitiveness of Japanese goods. He said South Korea's free trade deal with the EU, which took effect in 2015, caused a massive handicap to Japan's car and electronics industries.

Senior economist Junichi Sugawara of Mizuho Research Institute told The Straits Times he expects "innovation and productivity growth to be sparked by an active exchange of goods, services, capital, people, technology and data in both directions".

The EPA, he added, will contribute to building global standards and rules in nascent areas such as environment, medicine and data transmission.

waltsim@sph.com.sg

East Coast electoral division altered to include Pedra Branca

Voter rolls also being updated and will be open for public inspection later this month

Linette Lai
Political Correspondent

The electoral division of East Coast has been altered to include the island of Pedra Branca.

This was announced in a notice put up yesterday in the electronic Government Gazette.

The East Coast electoral division includes Bedok, Simei, Siglap and offshore islands Pulau Ubin and Pulau Tekong.

In a separate statement, the Elections Department (ELD) said Singapore's voter rolls are being updated and will be open for public inspection for two weeks towards the end of this month. When the time comes, it will provide information on how Singaporeans can check the registers of electors.

The Parliamentary Elections Act requires the registers to be revised no later than three years after ev-

ery general election. It also provides for the Prime Minister to call for revisions from time to time.

The last general election took place in September 2015, while the next must be held by April 2021.

The registers of electors were last updated in June 2017, in preparation for the presidential election in September that year.

Any person who meets the following qualifying criteria as of yesterday will have his or her name included in the register of electors for an electoral division:

- is a Singapore citizen
- is aged 21 or above
- is not disqualified from being an elector under any current law
- has a Singapore residential address on his or her NRIC; or for those residing overseas, a local contact address registered with the Immigration and Checkpoints Authority for voting purposes.

Responding to queries on why Pedra Branca has been included in the electoral map, the ELD said: "All offshore islands that are part of Singapore's territory are included in our electoral map." These include Sultan Shoal off the coast of Jurong Island, and Kusu Island, which lies south-east of Sentosa.

The notice to include Pedra Branca comes after Malaysia withdrew an application in May last year to revise a 2008 judgment by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) that awarded sovereignty of Pedra Branca to Singapore.

The withdrawal by Malaysia meant that it could no longer challenge Singapore's sovereignty of Pedra Branca, as the 10-year window provided for in the ICJ's Statute for an application for revision to be made had lapsed.

The small island of Pedra Branca – also known as Pulau Batu Puteh – houses the Horsburgh Lighthouse, and is located about 40km east of Singapore's main island. The lighthouse is unmanned.

linettel@sph.com.sg

In your Sunday Times tomorrow

Insight

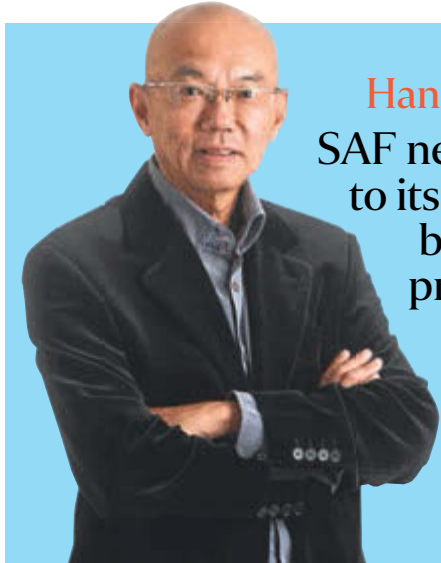
Punish or rehabilitate?

Insight examines why Singapore has made changes to the way drug abusers are dealt with

Slow travel: It's about the journey



Unlucky in love, some single women go overseas to have babies



Han Fook Kwang
SAF needs to listen to its servicemen, both past and present, when it comes to safety

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Workers at the government-run Mandai Crematorium are not allowed to receive cash or gifts, but some industry insiders said the illegal practice has gone on quietly for decades. At least three workers from different companies were called in for questioning by the CPIB this week. LIANHE ZAOBAO FILE PHOTOS

Workers at crematorium in trouble over red packets

CPIB questions some over practice of accepting gifts from bereaved families at Mandai facility

Cara Wong and Charmaine Ng

Crematorium workers who take red packets from bereaved families and funeral directors who pass them on to these workers are now in trouble with the authorities over this practice at the government-run Mandai Crematorium.

In the past week, more than 20 workers from private funeral businesses as well as crematorium workers have reportedly been hauled up by the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB), said Shin Min Daily News yesterday.

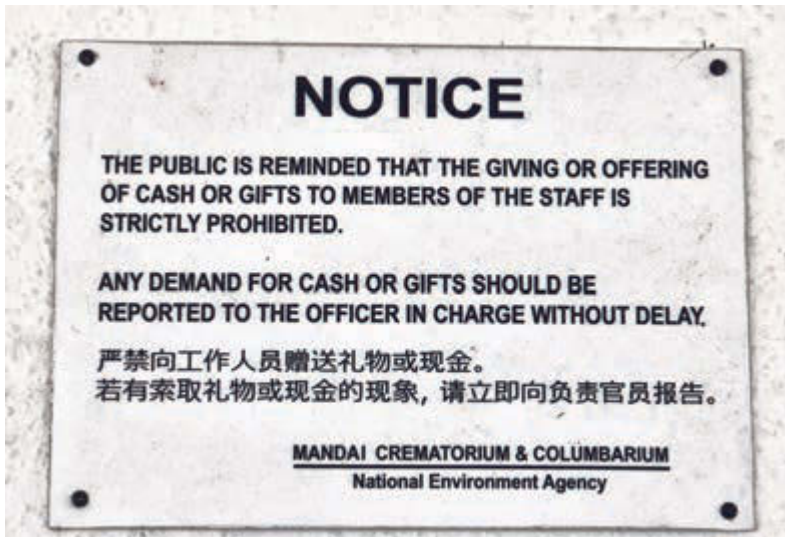
Checks by The Straits Times found at least three workers from different companies were called in for questioning by the CPIB this week, while another two were questioned as witnesses of the practice. The three were later released on a bail of \$20,000 each.

The CPIB and National Environment Agency (NEA), which runs the Mandai Crematorium, confirmed investigations are ongoing.

NEA said it received information late last year that some Mandai Crematorium staff had allegedly been accepting red packets from funeral directors in the course of their work. "NEA takes a serious view of these allegations and immediately reported the matter to the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau for their follow-up," said a spokesman.

But some industry insiders were baffled by the timing of the investigations, saying the illegal practice has gone on quietly for decades, and that funeral directors merely pass the red packets to workers on behalf of families.

Chinese and Indian families willingly give such packets, which are seen as an auspicious gesture to "bless" the workers with good



One of the signs put up at Mandai Crematorium to remind the public not to offer money or gifts to the employees.

luck, funeral directors told ST.

Families typically give sums ranging from \$2 to \$50, although they may be advised to give about \$20 or \$24, which is the "market rate" for such red packets, they said.

The funeral directors emphasised that they do not press the families to give the red packets, and some families offer the red packets without prompting.

Funeral directors do not benefit in any way from conveying such packets to the crematorium workers, and there is no preferential treatment given to those who do so, they claimed.

"The whole process of cremation is very systematic. It's not as though by giving them a hongbao, we will get better times (for cremation) or better treatment," said a funeral director.

However, he said some workers at the crematorium may have taken this gesture of goodwill as a given, and may feel disgruntled if they do not get them.

Another funeral director said red packets are usually discreetly given, as it is well known that workers are not allowed to receive gifts.

"It's an industrywide practice,

but we all know it's not allowed," said the funeral director, whose employee was questioned by the CPIB on Wednesday and released the same day on a bail of \$20,000.

Association of Funeral Directors president Ang Zi Sheng said he found out about the investigations from the Chinese papers.

"We encourage members and the public to comply with regulations set out by NEA of not giving any gifts of any nature to crematorium staff," said Mr Ang.

Signs cautioning the public against handing money or gifts to crematorium workers are posted outside all of the crematorium's service halls and in waiting areas.

A 61-year-old retiree attending a funeral there said he was not aware of the practice.

"We weren't asked by the undertaker to give any red packets. If they had asked, we would have given also, because we're not aware that it's not allowed and we wouldn't have known any better," said the man, who declined to be named.

carawong@sph.com.sg
ngxtc@sph.com.sg

Watchdog calls for fixing root causes of recurrent lapses in public sector

Adrian Lim
Political Correspondent

The parliamentary watchdog of public sector accounts has flagged recurrent lapses by government agencies in the areas of IT controls and financial governance, and urged them to understand and fix the root causes.

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC), which reviews the Auditor-General's annual report, noted that the lapses in many instances took place not because of a lack of rules, procedures or systems, but due to agencies failing to comply with the controls put in place.

This could be due to various reasons, such as the lack of understanding or clarity of the rules, it said in the report it submitted to Parliament on Thursday.

To address the problem, the PAC said it is important that staff understand the purpose, underlying principle and rationale of rules.

To tackle the recurring lapses, it is "crucial for public sector leaders to set the right tone at the top and be involved in designing and implementing effective controls and processes".

The committee, which comprises eight MPs and is chaired by Ms Jessica Tan, made the call following its review of the Auditor-General's report for financial year 2017/18.

The repeated blunders made, the PAC noted, were "in the management of contracts, management of user accounts and access rights in IT systems, and in the area of procurement and payments".

On weaknesses in IT controls, it said the "review of user access rights, removal of obsolete user accounts and not sharing accounts are fundamental controls which agencies are required to comply with".

Calling for more to be done to ensure effective compliance, the PAC said "weaknesses in these controls could become the weakest link in IT systems".

One case it highlighted related to the Ministry of Defence (Mindef), where authorised users were found to have shared their user accounts with unauthorised persons to carry out procurement activities in its Electronic Procurement System.

Mindef told the PAC that it has undertaken a three-pronged solution that includes strengthening its disciplinary framework for users who flout the rules and improving its IT system, like automatically locking account access for users on overseas leave.

In contract management, the PAC flagged instances of failing to obtain proper approvals for the award of contracts in the People's Association (PA). This was a recurrent lapse, with a similar observation made in the Auditor-General's report for financial year 2014/15.

The Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth said the PA formed the Grassroots Finance Review Committee in July 2015 to review the grassroots organisations' (GROs) financial procedures, implemented measures to improve compliance and conducted training for grassroots leaders. The ministry said it has seen progress since the measures were implemented, the PAC wrote.

To further strengthen the system, one measure the PA has taken is to review the GRO procurement policy to further refine it to facilitate decision-making, by the end of last year.

The PAC also noted the Ministry of Finance's (MOF) measures to fix lapses at the whole-of-government level. These include stepping up engagement with public sector leaders to ensure they understand their critical role in upholding a sound and robust system.

To tackle non-compliance with rules, the MOF has asked agencies to review their internal policies and processes to "strike a sensible balance between strengthening controls and sustaining operational efficiency", the PAC's report said.

adrianl@sph.com.sg

Some of the incidents

SINGAPORE CIVIL DEFENCE FORCE

The Singapore Civil Defence Force managed two vehicle maintenance contracts poorly. The Auditor-General's Office report said the SCDF did not have adequate procedures to ensure contractors gave the required services, which cost \$1.8 million a year.

The AGO's test-checks found that the SCDF paid \$120,000 for maintenance jobs purportedly done on 21 vehicles but which the contractors did not actually perform. Some servicing records given to the auditors were also created and backdated.

To address the lapses, the SCDF introduced a system for its units to monitor and track the servicing records of vehicles, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) told the Public Accounts Committee (PAC). The SCDF headquarters would tally the monthly invoice against servicing records before paying contractors. It would also do surprise checks on the contractors.

From the middle of this year, the SCDF would also use the MHA-wide integrated logistics management system. The system's vehicle maintenance module gives vehicle maintenance plans and servicing details, among other features.

PEOPLE'S ASSOCIATION

The People's Association (PA) and one of its grassroots organisations (GROs) had lapses in pro-

curement and contract management for major events. Serious weaknesses were also found in overseas purchases and payments for Chingay Parade 2017, including "telltale signs indicating that some cash sale receipts submitted for reimbursement claims might not be authentic", the PAC said.

The Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth said the PA has put in place several measures, such as "centralising the management of high-value contracts to specialised procurement staff at PA headquarters and deploying specialised staff to assist GROs in their procurement, by mid-2019".

Since last April, grassroots volunteers have been into e-learning, and it includes training in financial and procurement matters.

NATIONAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION

The AGO said the National Research Foundation (NRF) did not have procedures for monitoring and recovering unused grants from recipients. An AGO test-check found unused grants were not promptly recovered in 10 out of 13 completed projects. The Prime Minister's Office told the PAC the NRF will set up clear procedures to monitor and follow up with recipients to ensure unused funds are recovered promptly.

Adrian Lim

UNAWARE

We weren't asked by the undertaker to give any red packets. If they had asked, we would have given also, because we're not aware that it's not allowed and we wouldn't have known any better.



A RETIREE, who was attending a funeral, on not being aware of the practice. He declined to be named.

Frederick Chew to become A*Star's CEO on April 1

Chang Ai-Lien
Science Editor

Following a career in defence, Rear Admiral (RADM) Frederick Chew will take the reins of Singapore's largest public sector research agency in April, when its current chairman Lim Chuan Poh retires.

The Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) announced yesterday that RADM Chew, 43, will be appointed chief executive officer of the Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*Star) on April 1.

He is currently Deputy Secretary (Technology) at the Ministry of Defence – a position he will continue

to helm until the middle of the year.

It was announced last month that Permanent Secretary for Education Chan Lai Fung, 55, would be appointed the agency's non-executive chairman, while current A*Star chief, Mr Lim, 57, a former chief of defence force who has been in the public service for 38 years, would be retiring.

MTI Permanent Secretary Loh Khum Yean said: "With their vast experience across diverse backgrounds, I am confident that Lai Fung and Frederick will be able to take A*Star to greater heights and further its mission of advancing scientific discovery and technological innovation to create eco-

nomie growth and improve the lives of Singaporeans."

Explaining the change in management structure to a non-executive chairman and CEO, MTI told The Straits Times that the agency had grown remarkably since its establishment in January 2002.

Given its role and importance, A*Star will be transitioning to a non-executive chairman appointment, "typical of most statutory boards in Singapore", it said.

Ms Chan would steer A*Star in charting its strategic direction and priorities, MTI explained, while RADM Chew would assume the agency's executive leadership role and responsibilities.



Rear Admiral Frederick Chew is currently Deputy Secretary of Technology at the Ministry of Defence.

RADM Chew has held various key positions in the Defence Ministry and the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF), including director of joint operations, commander of maritime security task force and head of naval plans, said MTI, noting that he has made many significant contributions in his various appointments.

As Deputy Secretary (Technol-

ogy) in Mindef, he has been instrumental in optimising the Defence Technology ecosystem, in particular strengthening Mindef's partnership with industry, it added.

RADM Chew is currently a board member of the Defence Science and Technology Agency (DSTA) and DSO National Laboratories. He will also be appointed a board member of A*Star from April 1.

A*Star, which has about 5,200 employees, is recognised as one of the world's top innovative government science and technology organisations.

Last year, it announced its biggest shake-up to date, with broad changes made to the way the re-

search institutes under its charge would be run, in efforts to make the organisation more nimble in the use of talent and funds.

However, some staff say issues such as funding difficulties and uncertainty over the future remain.

One senior staff member, commenting on the appointment, said that it is critical for the incoming CEO to have an in-depth understanding of research and a long-term plan on how to lead the curve in scientific advancement.

The scientist said: "With billions of taxpayer dollars at stake, it is imperative for A*Star's leadership to have a clear vision of what innovation and research are needed for the industries of the future, and how to take that all the way from R&D to commercialisation."

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WORLD



JOKO WIDODO
INDONESIAN PRESIDENT'S
RE-ELECTION BID
NOT A SURE BET **A20**

A South Korean soldier (far right) meeting a North Korean one before crossing the Military Demarcation Line last December to inspect a dismantled North Korean guard post inside the Demilitarised Zone dividing the two Koreas in Cheorwon. PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE



Trump ready to end Korean War: US envoy

He says Kim commits towards denuclearisation, US may step back from demands on the issue

Charissa Yong
US Correspondent
In Washington

United States President Donald Trump is ready to end the Korean War, said special envoy Stephen Biegun on Thursday, in a signal that a formal end to the decades-long conflict could be on the cards, ahead of a second summit between Mr Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un planned for this month.

Mr Biegun also revealed that Mr Kim committed to dismantle and destroy North Korea's plutonium and uranium enrichment facilities when Secretary of State Mike Pompeo visited Pyongyang last October.

The complex of sites represented the "totality" of North Korea's plutonium reprocessing and uranium enrichment programmes and went beyond the now-inactive Yongbyon nuclear facility, which Mr Kim already pledged to give up if the US would take corresponding actions, he said.

A declaration to end the Korean War has been a long-held wish of both North and South Korea, but the US has thus far been reluctant to agree to even a symbolic statement over concerns it could lead to calls for the withdrawal of the 28,500 US troops stationed in South Korea.

"I am absolutely convinced, and more importantly, the President of the United States is convinced, that it's time to move past 70 years of war and hostility on the Korean peninsula. There is no reason for this conflict to persist any longer," said Mr Biegun in his first public speech since being appointed the Trump administration's point man on North Korea in August last year.

"It is over. It is done. We are not going to invade North Korea. We are not seeking to topple the North Korean regime," he said at Stanford University.

Mr Trump said on Thursday that his second summit with Mr Kim, scheduled for the end of this month,

was "moving along well" and that he would announce more details next week, likely during his State of the Union address on Tuesday.

Mr Pompeo said on Wednesday that North Korea had agreed the summit would be held "some place in Asia".

Mr Biegun himself will travel to Seoul tomorrow to meet his South Korean counterpart Lee Do-hoon.

He will also have follow-up meetings with his North Korean counterpart Kim Hyok Chol to discuss the next steps to advance America's objective of the final fully verified denuclearisation of North Korea, and to make further progress on all the commitments the two leaders made at the Singapore Summit in June last year, the State Department said in a statement on Thursday.

Progress on denuclearisation has somewhat stalled since the summit in Singapore. Pyongyang has said Washington should reciprocate its good faith in dismantling the Punggye-ri nuclear test site and ending nuclear missile tests by lifting punishing sanctions. Washington's stance has been that sanctions will not be lifted before Pyongyang achieves complete, verifiable, irreversible denuclearisation.

Mr Biegun's contention that Pyongyang had promised to get rid of its plutonium and uranium enrichment programme was greeted with some scepticism in the light of the US intelligence community's annual assessment on worldwide threats, released earlier this week, that North Korea was unlikely to give up all of its weapons of mass destruction stockpiles, delivery systems, and production capabilities.



TIME TO MOVE ON

I am absolutely convinced, and more importantly, the President of the United States is convinced, that it's time to move past 70 years of war and hostility on the Korean peninsula.



U.S. SPECIAL ENVOY STEPHEN BIEGUN

When questioned by former diplomat and seasoned Korea scholar Ben Carlin, who took part in US-North Korea negotiations from 1992 to 2000, Mr Biegun did not contradict the intelligence assessment but said it was "divorced from policy".

"North Korea has given us little indication that they have yet made the decision to completely dismantle and destroy that capability. We all know that," said Mr Biegun.

"Therefore, 'what' is the question, and what President Trump has done is directed the Secretary of State to engage diplomatically through a combination of pressure and incentives to see if we can invite North Korea to make a different set of choices. That's the complete picture," he added.

In his speech, Mr Biegun tried to appeal to impoverished North Korea with promises of economic prosperity as he sought to show a way out of the diplomatic impasse.

"At the appropriate time, with the completion of denuclearisation, we are prepared to explore with North Korea and many other countries the best way to mobilise investment, improve infrastructure, enhance food security, and drive a level of economic engagement that will allow the North Korean people to fully share in the rich future of their Asian neighbours," he said.

But while the future was "bigger than denuclearisation", final, fully verified denuclearisation remained the foundation of US policy to North Korea, Mr Biegun stressed.

He signalled that the US could be

willing to step back from earlier demands that denuclearisation had to come before all else, saying: "If we do not address the weapons of mass destruction issue on the Korean peninsula today, we will have an Asia-Pacific nuclear weapons challenge tomorrow... But in relative terms, we're also not demanding that this be the starting point."

"In parallel, we're willing to look at a lot of other things that we can do together that also build the confidence and reduce the sense of risk or threat that would potentially drive a country to want to sustain that kind of capacity."

Mr Biegun also said that before the process of denuclearisation could be final, the US must have a complete understanding of the full extent of the North Korean nuclear missile programmes, but hinted this did not need to come right away.

"We will get that at some point through a comprehensive declaration," he said.

Former State Department official Mintaro Oba told The Straits Times: "It's certainly a step forward for a US official to directly state that the United States won't invade North Korea, and that it wants to end the Korean War. I can't recall any previous instance where that has happened."

Public comments like these help send the right signals to the North Koreans that the United States is serious about the diplomatic process, added Mr Oba, who worked on North Korea policy.

But Mr Biegun's comments about a comprehensive nuclear and missile declaration suggest little has changed substantively in America's position, he said.

"If Washington's main goal is denuclearisation, it will have to be much more flexible to make any progress with North Korea, which highly values its nuclear programme and is unlikely to document and reveal everything it has, especially without major US concessions," he said.

These concessions could include the lifting of sanctions, which would have to be a part of any ambitious and comprehensive deal with North Korea, and security guarantees and progress towards the normalisation of relations, he added.

charyong@sph.com.sg

N. KOREA

WHAT IT PROMISES

- At the Singapore Summit last year, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un committed to the complete denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula.
- North Korea pointed to unilateral moves such as the destruction of its Punggye-ri nuclear test site, among other actions, as signs that it was following through on its commitment.
- Pyongyang also agreed, at the third inter-Korea summit in September last year, to dismantle its Yongbyon nuclear facility in the presence of American and International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors, on the condition that the United States take "corresponding actions".

WHAT IT WANTS

- North Korea wants the US to ease sanctions and guarantee the security of its regime, as well as make a formal declaration to end the Korean War.
- Of late, it has complained that the US has been too demanding in calling for unilateral denuclearisation. Instead, Pyongyang prefers reciprocal, step-by-step concessions and has called on the US to build confidence and mutual trust.

U.S.

WHAT IT PROMISES

- United States President Donald Trump has committed to give security guarantees to North Korea at his summit with Mr Kim Jong Un last June.
- The US also promised that should North Korea carry out its commitment to complete denuclearisation, the US will work with it to boost its impoverished economy, attract investment, improve infrastructure and enhance food security. Central to this would be the lifting of current sanctions on North Korea.

WHAT IT WANTS

- Top of the US' list of demands is North Korea's complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation. This means completely eliminating its nuclear weapons programmes, including the means of production and delivery of intercontinental ballistic missiles.
- The US wants a complete list of nuclear weapons and missile sites from North Korea, though not necessarily right away, officials have indicated.
- Mr Trump and Mr Kim also agreed to repatriate the remains of troops killed in the Korean War. Those of 55 soldiers have since been returned.

Charissa Yong



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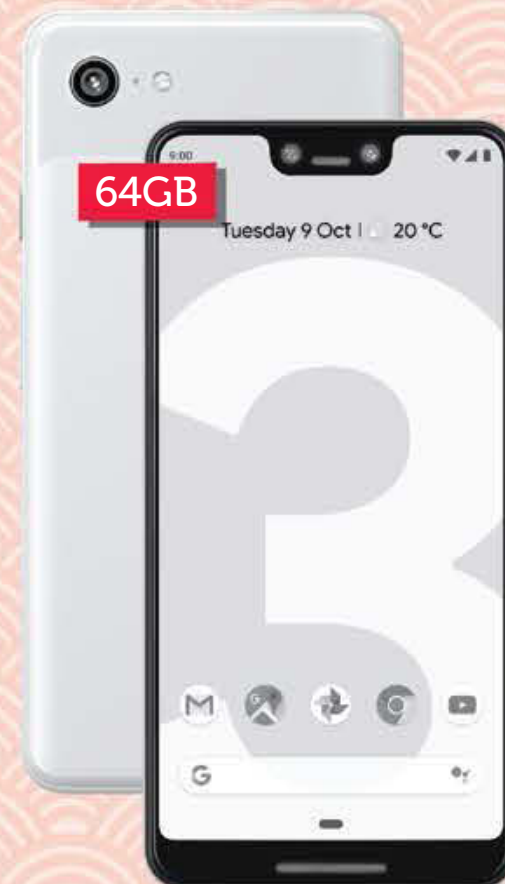
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India's Budget aimed at middle class, farmers

Election-year goodies include tax relief, welfare scheme, pensions

Nirmala Ganapathy
India Bureau Chief
In New Delhi

The Narendra Modi government has unveiled an election-year interim Budget which contains tax relief for sections of the middle class, a new welfare scheme for farmers and a pension scheme for workers.

Analysts said the spending plan was clearly aimed at core constituents of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), including the middle class.

Interim Finance Minister Piyush Goyal, stepping in for Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, who is in the US for medical treatment, unveiled the Budget in Parliament yesterday.

Up to 120 million small and marginal farmers will benefit from a scheme that gives them 6,000 rupees (\$114) a year as "assured income". Some 100 million workers earning up to 15,000 rupees a month will get an "assured pension" of 3,000 rupees a month after the age of 60.

In a sop to the middle class, Mr Goyal announced that those earning up to 500,000 rupees a year will be exempted from income tax. Currently, the income limit for tax exemption is 250,000 rupees.

In a televised address to the nation after the Budget was presented, Mr Modi said: "This is an interim Budget. This is just a trailer of the Budget which, after elections, will take India on the path to development."

Mr Modi came to power with a massive majority in the 2014 election, riding on the promise of jobs and fast-paced economic growth.

He is still popular, having implemented several big-ticket reforms, including the goods and services tax, but ahead of the election in May, he faces several difficult issues.

On Thursday, the government had to explain why it had delayed the release of figures which showed that unemployment hit a 45-year high of 6.1 per cent in 2017-2018.

Additionally, the agriculture sector has been in distress, with farmers beset by multiple problems, including falling incomes, poor irrigation facilities and heavy loans.

Many analysts were unanimous in describing the spending plan outlined yesterday as a populist Budget.

"This is a populist Budget aimed at farmers and middle class. The fiscal consolidation is going to be a huge problem with all these concessions," said Professor Biswajit Dhar, who teaches economics at Jawaharlal Nehru University.

"Of course, they are trying to appease the farmers, but the question that needs to be asked is, Would this money compensate for their losses?" he said.



Armed policemen guarding bags containing Budget papers inside the Parliament premises in New Delhi yesterday. The interim Budget contains tax relief for sections of the middle class, a new welfare scheme for farmers and a pension scheme for workers. PHOTO: REUTERS

120m

Number of small and marginal farmers who will benefit from a scheme that gives them 6,000 rupees a year as "assured income".

Moody's Investors Service also warned about the fiscal cost.

It noted that "no new policies to increase revenues were announced" and while the direct income support scheme for farmers and subsidised agriculture loans are likely to boost the rural economy through consumption in the near term, it will have a fiscal cost.

As elections near, the opposition parties have also been dangling goodies for voters.

Congress president Rahul Gandhi recently announced a minimum income guarantee for the poor if his party is returned to power.

Congress leader P. Chidambaram, a former finance minister, denounced the interim Budget as "an election campaign speech". But big business welcomed it.

Mr Chandrajit Banerjee, Confederation of Indian Industry director-general, said: "The Budget... has touched the right notes for stimulating demand and growth in the economy. By strongly addressing the major consuming sections of society... it aims to stabilise incomes and reduce risks for vulnerable people."

gnirmala@sph.com.sg

PH must address Malays' issues with govt, says DPM

KUALA LUMPUR • Malaysia's Deputy Prime Minister Wan Azizah Wan Ismail said yesterday that more needs to be done to reduce Malay unhappiness with the Pakatan Harapan (PH) administration.

She was responding to a survey by pollster Itham Centre showing that the government's approval rating among Malay respondents was slightly above 40 per cent.

The survey also found that 59.5 per cent of 2,614 Malay respondents did not approve of the government's performance in the first five months after last May's general election.

The worry among PH leaders over slippage in Malay support rose following the alliance's loss in the Jan 26 Cameron Highlands by-election, when the Malays mostly voted for opposition party Umno.

"We must listen to the woes and opinions of the people and take steps to see if their (disapproval) was real or imagined," Datuk Seri Wan Azizah told reporters, as quoted by Malay Mail online news yesterday.

"The majority of Malaysians are Malays, so when they say the majority of them (are unhappy), we have to take note and see what we can do to address it."

The four-party PH toppled Barisan Nasional, led by Malay nationalist party Umno, at the general election nearly nine months ago. Dr Wan Azizah said the young PH government is still adjusting its policies.

"Coming in as a new government following a change in 60 years, there are adjustments that need to be done and only now we are able to find out," she said.

"We take note of that and find ourselves wanting to do what is popular yet having to consider what the country needs," she said, as quoted by Malay Mail.

There were murmurs of unhappiness among Malays when, soon after the general election, PH appointed an ethnic Chinese as finance minister (Lim Guan Eng), and non-Malays as de facto law minister (Liew Vui Keong) and attorney-general (Tommy Thomas).

There also appeared to be unease among Malays about the intentions of PH over the longstanding bumiputera policy that gives them priority in education, business and housing.

Added to this is the race-baiting often employed by the two main opposition parties, Umno and Parti Islam SeMalaysia, with PH often depicted as being dictated by the Chinese-led Democratic Action Party (DAP).

The Itham Centre survey found that more than 60 per cent of the respondents believed that non-Muslims are now in control of the government and that PH is a puppet of the DAP's interests, according to a report in The Malaysian Insight online news.

Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, responding to the survey, rejected the findings.

"I have never been a puppet yet," he was quoted as saying by The Star newspaper.

"I talked to many Malays. It is not 60 per cent (of Malays against PH). There is a small percentage, but not 60 per cent."

Datuk Kadir Jasin, the Prime Minister's media and communications adviser, wrote on his blog on Tuesday: "Be forewarned. If the people could vote the PH in, they could also vote the PH out."

Stray leopard goes on rampage in Indian village



A wild leopard strayed into a house in Lamba Pind village in the northern Indian city of Jalandhar on Thursday, terrifying people as it panicked and attacked people in its path. Several attempts were quickly made to capture it, but the big cat managed to hurt at least six people, though none was too seriously injured, local media said. The Tribune news site reported that the leopard was finally caught in a net after being hit by two tranquillising darts, but it still managed to escape. It jumped over a wall, tore across a field and pounced on Forest Department officials and bystanders. A third dart was administered and the leopard was subdued. The operation lasted nearly 10 hours, and the cat was subsequently taken to a nearby zoo for examination. PHOTO: REUTERS

Philippine minister 'certain' church bombers were Indonesian

MANILA • A deadly church bombing that shook the southern Philippines at the weekend was a suicide attack carried out by an Indonesian couple, with the help of an Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS)-linked group, the Philippine interior minister said yesterday.

Citing information provided by witnesses and undisclosed sources, Interior Secretary Eduardo Ano said he was certain that an Indonesian man and wife were behind Sunday's attack on the mainly Muslim

island of Jolo, which killed 22 people and wounded more than 100, including civilians and soldiers.

ISIS claimed responsibility for what it said were suicide bombings. Such attacks are almost unheard of in the Philippines.

"They are Indonesians," Mr Ano, a former military chief, told CNN Philippines. "I am certain that they are Indonesians."

Mr Ano's remarks are the latest twist in a probe that has been fraught with inconsistent and some-

times contradictory accounts from the authorities and, according to one investigator interviewed on television, complicated by a contaminated crime scene.

Security officials had initially said the two bombs were remote detonated, but by Tuesday, that changed after President Rodrigo Duterte said it may have been a suicide bomber, a view supported by his defence minister.

Defence Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said yesterday bag checks at

the entrance to the church would have made it difficult to plant a bomb there, so a device strapped to the body was more likely.

"According to the forensic investigators... these body parts could belong to two persons: one inside the church and one outside," Mr Lorenzana told reporters.

Mr Ano said the couple had received help from Abu Sayyaf, a militant organisation notorious for kidnappings and extremist factions.

He said those who plotted the at-

tack would have been under the instruction of an operative he said had been recognised by ISIS.

The violence has rekindled fears about the extent of ISIS' influence in South-east Asia, and the lure of Mindanao for extremists from Malaysia, Indonesia and elsewhere.

Martial law has been in place in Mindanao since domestic and foreign fighters dressed in black outfits overran Marawi City in 2017 and clung on through five months of air strikes and street battles rem-

iniscent of scenes in Syria and Iraq.

The latest violence follows a peaceful Jan 21 referendum that overwhelmingly approved autonomy for the predominantly Muslim parts of Mindanao, following a peace accord that excluded the Abu Sayyaf.

On Wednesday, two people were killed when a grenade was thrown into a mosque in nearby Zamboanga, a mainly Christian province. It is not clear who was behind it. REUTERS

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China's 'Useless Edison' charms the Net

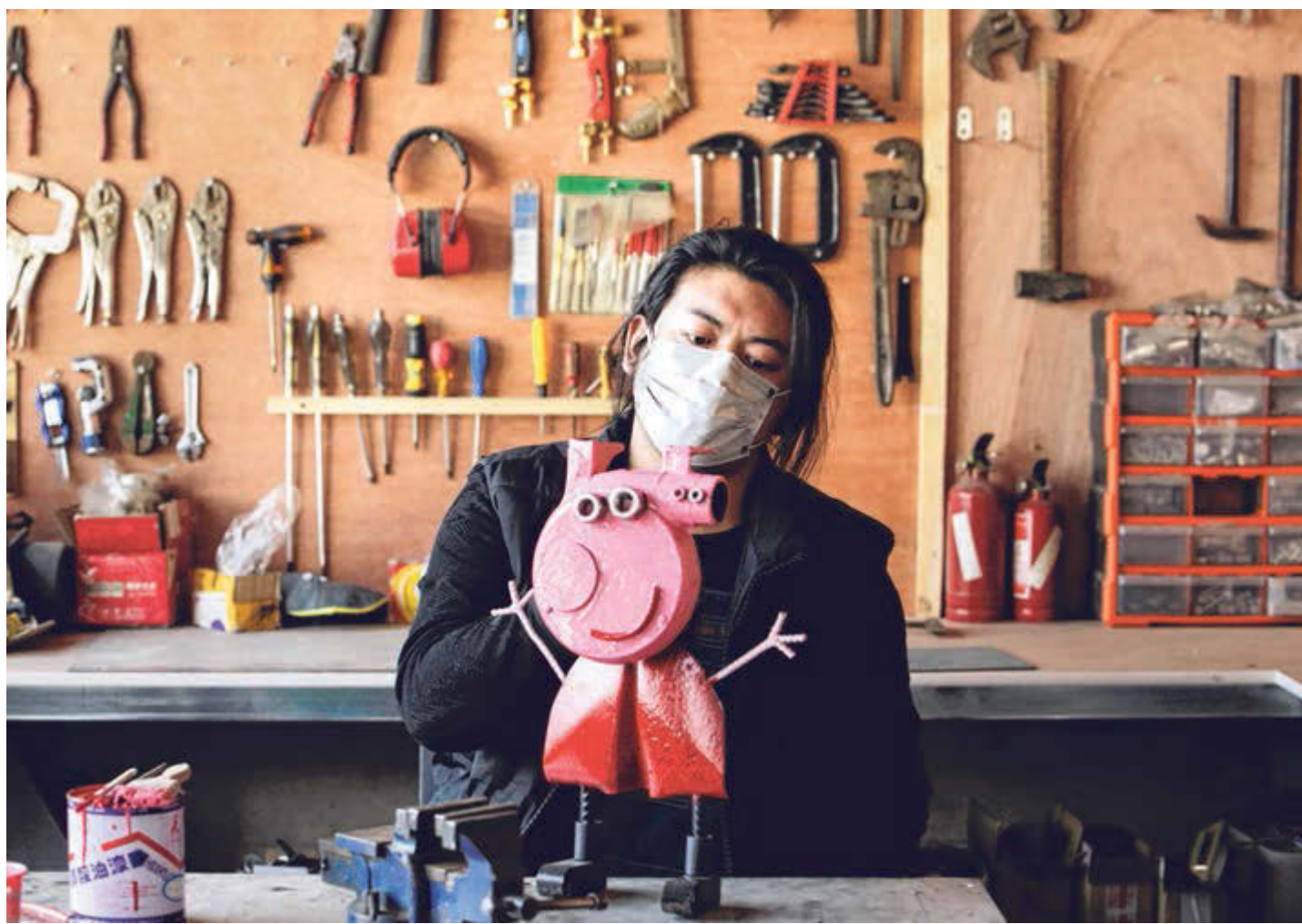
YANGCUN (China) • A meat cleaver that doubles as a mobile telephone case, a sword you can use to scrub your back, and a toilet built into a scooter that flushes when you pull a lever on the handlebar.

These are just a few of the wacky inventions Chinese village craftsman Geng Shuai has dreamed up and demonstrated in videos live-streamed to thousands.

"Most days I don't go to sleep until after midnight, I'm so busy thinking, OK, what should I make next?" said Mr Geng, 31, who sports a ponytail and trademark blue dungarees.

Dubbed "China's Useless Edison", his fame has grown because his inventions are seen as odd, and often unnecessary.

The former plumber, who lives in the northern province of Hebei, became an Internet sensation with videos of his creations posted online in 2017. He has since racked up more than 2.7 million followers on the Chinese short video app Kuaishou and nearly a million on its Twitter-like Weibo.



Mr Geng Shuai, dubbed "China's Useless Edison" by fans, with (clockwise, from left) a sculpture depicting animated series character Peppa Pig, made of an air blower; a cell phone case in the shape of a knife; and a stainless steel handbag in the shape of a hammer. PHOTOS: REUTERS

"The jobs I used to have were extremely boring and uninspiring. It was more or less a case of doing the same thing every day," said Mr Geng, who spent more than a dozen years in jobs he did not enjoy after dropping out of school at 16.

Crafting items from metal comes naturally to Mr Geng, who cher-

ishes childhood memories of sneaking into the factory where his welder father worked, to observe him and occasionally help.

Now, Mr Geng earns about three times what he used to, he said, despite poor sales and prices seen as high, because each specialised item takes a long time to make by hand.

His earnings come mainly from online tokens bought by followers and advertisements.

Mr Geng says he puts a lot of effort into preparing for the live-streaming, as public speaking does not come naturally to him.

"Sometimes during a live-stream, I run out of things to say. That feels

very awkward."

Comments, questions and likes from fans cascaded in at a recent live-stream session where he demonstrated several inventions, such as a handbag built into a hammer resembling that wielded by Thor, the God of Thunder in Norse mythology.

Mr Geng's creative mind is a joy to watch, said Mr Zhou Bingke, who teaches welding and metalwork at Tsinghua University.

"Seeing Geng's videos will lead to more people making things. Whether it's works of art or other things for fun, the process of manufacturing is enjoyable." REUTERS

HK leader feels the heat over social issues

Residents unhappy with change in welfare scheme for elderly, overcrowded hospitals

Claire Huang
Hong Kong Correspondent

The pressure on Hong Kong leader

Carrie Lam is building, with public unhappiness over several issues, including the tightening of welfare eligibility for the elderly and the overcrowding in public hospitals.

The city's Chief Executive on Tuesday admitted that her government could have better handled the move to raise the age limit of those eligible for the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme from 60 years to 65 years. The change, which kicked in yesterday, has been called mean-spirited and sparked criticisms and protests.

Not even a cash handout could win Mrs Lam's government some brownie points. Instead, critics slammed the messy application process for the handouts of up to HK\$4,000 (\$\$690) for those who are not property owners or receiving welfare benefits.

Meanwhile, with the winter flu season in full swing, the past two weekends have seen public hospital doctors and nurses protesting against the lack of resources and manpower as they struggled to deal with the surge in patient load.

On Tuesday, the government set aside an extra HK\$500 million for the Hospital Authority to help over-stretched public hospitals.

The issues have led to the growing unpopularity of Mrs Lam's government.

The results of a survey by the Chinese University of Hong Kong released on Monday showed that more than a third of the 700 Hong Kong residents polled said they were unhappy with the government's performance, while only 26.6 per cent – the lowest since July 2017, when Mrs Lam took office – said they were contented.

Assistant Professor Edmund Cheng from the Department of Government and International Studies at Hong Kong Baptist University said: "I think what is going to be most contentious in 2019 is the administration's elitist ruling style under low approval ratings."

Added Prof Cheng: "The government's popularity has been declining because of its mishandling of several service-provision and consultation-related issues. History has shown that the third year (of government) is often the end of the honeymoon period for the Chief Executive."

But other observers expect the issues to blow over after some time.

Associate Professor Alfred Wu of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy said: "These are small windows for people to vent their frustrations. They are not something more fundamental that will affect Hong Kong's freedom or long-term benefit."

He said he does not expect the is-

ssues to escalate further.

The bigger threat to Mrs Lam is the slowing economy, as well as a controversial national security law that her government is expected to introduce.

The government estimates that the city's economic growth last year would be 3.2 per cent, slower than the 3.8 per cent in 2017.

And economists expect growth to slow even further this year in the light of the trade war between the United States and China.

Prof Wu and Prof Cheng agreed that the introduction of a new and controversial national security law, viewed by many as a breach of Hong Kong's cherished freedoms, including those of expression and press, would be a clear landmine.

Article 23 of semi-autonomous Hong Kong's mini-Constitution, or the Basic Law, states that the territory must enact national security laws to prohibit "treason, secession, sedition (and) subversion" against the Chinese government.



ELITIST RULING STYLE

I think what is going to be most contentious in 2019 is the administration's elitist ruling style under low approval ratings... The government's popularity has been in decline because of its mishandling of several service-provision and consultation-related issues.



ASSISTANT PROFESSOR EDMUND CHENG, from the Department of Government and International Studies at Hong Kong Baptist University, on the problem with Mrs Carrie Lam (above) and her government.

An attempt to roll out this law in 2003 was shelved after half a million people took to the streets in protest.

Observers have said that Mrs Lam is widely expected to introduce this law before her term ends in mid-2022, although some like Prof Wu have their doubts.

"I believe that Carrie Lam would like to do that, but it's not the right time because she has to deal with so many domestic issues and many concerns," he said.

And it would be tough to implement it amid growing dissatisfaction with the government over a wide range of issues, including railway construction scandals involving shoddy work and the decision to not prosecute former Hong Kong leader Leung Chun Ying, who was under a four-year investigation in connection with allegations of misconduct.

The government has said it did not have sufficient evidence.

Adjunct Professor Willy Lam of the Chinese University of Hong Kong said that maintaining current economic growth is still paramount for the government, as citizens would choose this over political liberties.

But he warned that if the government's social and welfare policies continue to alienate people and if the economy performs poorly, people will get angry.

He said: "They will hit the streets using Article 23 as a pretext, in which case Article 23 becomes the lowest (common) denominator – that is, people will use this as a way to express their dissatisfaction with Carrie Lam and with Beijing."

But Prof Wu was more optimistic. He said Mrs Lam is more popular than her predecessors and "has done a good job in boosting economic growth through infrastructure projects", so a slowing economy this year will not pose a great threat to her.

The key for her, he added, is how to strike a balance and "how to make people feel they are better off".

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Apr 2019 intake

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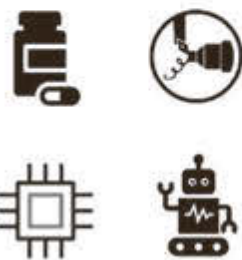
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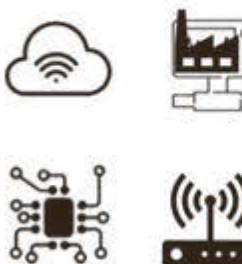
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Beijing to execute driver who killed ride-hailing passenger

BEIJING • A Chinese court yesterday sentenced a man to death for raping and killing a female passenger of ride-hailing company Didi Chuxing last year, while he was employed as a driver.

The crime triggered fierce public and government criticism of Didi – whose backers include Uber Technologies, Apple and Japan's SoftBank Group – and led to a safety overhaul at the company.

The court in the eastern coastal

city of Wenzhou announced the death penalty for 28-year-old Zhong Yuan, who committed the crime last August, in a post on its Twitter-like Weibo account.

"The criminal means were extremely cruel and the consequences of the crime are extremely serious," the court said.

Didi suspended its carpool service Hitch after the incident and pledged a business overhaul to put a greater emphasis on safety, includ-

ing strict rules for drivers who want to pick up passengers late at night.

A Didi spokesman said the company had no comment on the court sentence. Reuters was unable to reach Zhong for comment.

A technology news website reported on Wednesday that Didi is looking at cutting headcount in some departments by up to 20 per cent, and plans to hire more engineers experienced in safety and driver engagement. REUTERS

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Indonesian election

The race hots up

Campaigning for the Indonesian presidential election by the camps of President Joko Widodo and his only challenger Prabowo Subianto are on a faster track as the April 17 vote nears. Mr Joko, 57, is seeking his second and final five-year term in office. His running mate is Islamic cleric Ma'ruf Amin, 75.

Mr Prabowo, 67, a former army general, is hoping to win the second time around after being beaten in 2014. His running mate is businessman-turned-politician Sandiaga Uno, 49. Indonesia correspondent [Wahyudi Soeriaatmadja](#) takes a closer look at the campaigning that started on Sept 23.



POLLSTER DATA

10.6%-16.8%

Pool of undecided among Indonesia's 190 million registered voters.

The latest numbers by six pollsters, conducted between November and last month, showed that had polls been held during those periods:

47.7%-54.9%

of votes would go to the Joko-Ma'ruf pair.

30.6%-35.5%

of votes would go to the Prabowo-Sandiaga pair.

Indonesian President Joko Widodo with his running mate Ma'ruf Amin, who was seen as the weakest performer among the four candidates in the first presidential debate last month. PHOTO: BLOOMBERG

Jokowi banks on his record, needs to shore up running mate

The Indonesian government two months ago completed the first toll road linking capital city Jakarta to Surabaya, Indonesia's second-largest city. Incumbent President Joko Widodo has also refurbished and expanded airports, thus bringing in more tourists, built ports to ease bottlenecks and raised industrial parks that have attracted foreign investments. He is banking on this record of infrastructure building and job creation to win the presidential election, with the promise of more to come. "Our vision is Indonesia forward," Mr Joko said in the first

presidential debate last month. "We offer optimism and equitable (development) for the future of Indonesia." Mr Airlangga Hartarto, chairman of Golkar, the second-biggest party in Mr Joko's ruling coalition, told The Straits Times: "Our strategy is to stay positive and optimistic. We must bring optimism to our nation. There are basically two types of campaigning – (by way of spreading) hope and fear. We choose hope." Observers said Mr Joko, famous for his popular *blusukan*, or impromptu ground visits, in 2014 will need to repeat this to reduce his campaign's weaknesses.

To boost Mr Joko's credentials among conservative Muslims, chiefs of the political parties backing him had pressured him to pick Islamic cleric Ma'ruf Amin, former chairman of the Indonesian Ulama Council. But the elderly cleric is struggling to adapt to the fast pace of political exchanges and has rarely appeared on the ground as his mobility is affected by his age, according to observers. Dr Ma'ruf was also seen as the weakest performer among the four candidates in the first presidential debate that was aired live on television and radio. Frequent comparisons are being made between Dr Ma'ruf and Mr

Joko's current Vice-President Jusuf Kalla, whose political debating skills clearly contributed to the pair's victory in 2014. Mr Kalla is chairman of the Indonesian Mosque Council. Mr Kalla, 76, who is from South Sulawesi, was also credited with significantly bringing votes from outside the main island of Java. Such an advantage is not there this time around as Mr Joko and Dr Ma'ruf are from the main Java island. Recent survey results for Mr Joko, widely known as Jokowi, has not been as encouraging as expected, especially for a leader who has built the vast network of infrastructure, said political analyst Dimas Oky Nugroho, executive director of Akar Rumpit Strategic Consulting. He said: "Something is not working properly in his campaigning." There have been coordination problems among Mr Joko's volunteer groups, marked by a lack of communication among key people across these groups, observers said. Dr Dimas said one cannot be confident yet to say Mr Joko would

likely win the next election. Opinion polls show Mr Joko's electability has recently been stagnant and failed to rise above the 55 per cent mark, while Mr Prabowo's electability hovers above 30 per cent and is on a rising trend. "Jokowi is not in a safe position yet to be re-elected, considering the size of the undecided voters. One blunder by him near Polling Day may change everything," Dr Dimas told The Straits Times. Top politicians backing Mr Joko have also been caught several times in catfights among themselves. One example is the altercation last November involving Islam-based United Development Party (PPP) chairman Muhammad Romahurmuziy and Indonesian Solidarity Party (PSI) chairman Grace Natolie. PSI prioritises pluralism and Ms Grace had said laws or by-laws should not be syariah-based or based on other religious values, causing a rebuke from the PPP chief.

wahyudis@sph.com.sg

Prabowo zooms in on economic challenges

Presidential challenger Prabowo Subianto is zooming in on the country's economic challenges to corral support. Indonesia is struggling to reduce its current account deficit – having imported more goods and services than it exported – which probably exceeded US\$25 billion (S\$33.6 billion) last year, according to economists. Mr Prabowo told a university alumni gathering on Jan 25 that one should not be proud of borrowing money and making others repay the debts. He also promised to significantly cut Indonesia's debts if he won the election. "Don't say minister of finance any

more, perhaps (we should say) minister of debt printing," he said in the alumni speech in Jakarta. Last November, Mr Prabowo said he was targeting achieving self-sufficiency in food, energy and water. Speaking about the economy, Mr Prabowo's running mate Sandiaga Uno, made a claim last year that a plate of chicken rice was more expensive in Indonesia than in Singapore, thrusting the popular local dish into heated political debate. Vice-presidential candidate Sandiaga said chicken rice cost \$3.50 in Singapore, compared with about 50,000 rupiah (S\$5) in Indonesia. According to observers, most city voters would laugh at the claim, but people in villages, who have limited



Indonesia's presidential candidate Prabowo Subianto (far left), seen here with his running mate Sandiaga Uno, says he is targeting achieving self-sufficiency in food, energy and water for the sprawling archipelago. PHOTO: REUTERS

The Prabowo-Sandiaga pair has another ace up their sleeves, playing the religion card. With Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim-majority country of 260 million, fast turning conservative, the duo successfully harnessed the Islamic vote during the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election. Mr Prabowo had put his support behind both Mr Sandiaga, who ran for Jakarta's deputy governor, and Mr Anies Baswedan, who became governor of the capital. Mr Sandiaga served as Mr Anies' deputy for less than a year before joining Mr Prabowo's presidential ticket. In the first presidential debate on Jan 17, Mr Prabowo said "foreign interests" were behind terrorism in Indonesia, remarks that could endear him to conservative Muslims who blamed Western countries for being the hand behind terror attacks in Muslim countries. Dr Noor Huda Ismail, a visiting fellow at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, told The Straits Times: "That is a political statement by Prabowo. There are certain groups of Muslim voters who like to hear such remarks who Prabowo is targeting."

means to verify the accuracy of his statement, might believe him and think the government had failed to keep food prices affordable. Mr Ace Hasan Syadzily, a spokesman for President Joko Widodo's presidential campaign team seeking a second term, said chicken rice could cost as little as 15,000 rupiah in Indonesia, and argued that Mr Sandiaga's comments were an attempt at misinformation. The youthful-looking Mr Sandiaga has proven an asset to Mr Prabowo, actively campaigning on the ground, sometimes making seven to eight stops a day. He has even met small groups of various interests, ranging from women's community clubs to Quran recital groups.



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China's scholars fear curbs on freedom

Law textbook taken off shelves as Beijing targets universities in anti-West campaign

BEIJING • A constitutional law textbook written by one of China's best-known, reform-minded, legal scholars has been pulled from bookshops, apparently the latest text to run afoul of a government campaign against "Western influence".

The author, law lecturer Zhang Qianfan of Peking University, known for his advocacy of constitutionalism and judicial reform, dismissed any suggestion that his writing excessively promoted Western ideas as "utter nonsense", and said the academic world should not be politicised.

Since taking office in 2012, President Xi Jinping has tightened the Communist Party's control over society, including the legal system and education.

While the authorities have not confirmed if they had ordered the book withdrawn, and no reason for its disappearance has been given, it comes after the government launched a sweeping review of teaching materials.

The Ministry of Education launched early last month a nationwide check on the contents of all university constitutional law textbooks, according to posts on the Jiangxi and Zhejiang province education ministry websites.

Universities were told that the "fact-finding" sweep was of great importance and they must accurately fill in a chart detailing titles and authors of the books they used, with "no omissions", the ministry's posts said. The campaign drew criticism from some legal academics, which was amplified by a rumour that the sweep was triggered by an accusation by a professor that certain texts were "promoting Western thinking and agitating for a Western system".

China's Constitution promises freedom of speech, religion and assembly, but it is trumped in practice by legislation and regulations, and it is rarely invoked in legal cases. The Constitution has long been a focus for political reformers, who argue that its status should be elevated within the legal system.

Professor Zhang's book could not be found on China's main online bookstores when searched by Reuters yesterday.

In an interview published on the WeChat social media platform, Prof Zhang rejected any suggestion that his texts promoted a "Western" system over alternatives.

"To criticise purely for the sake of it and to shut our nation off to the outside world is closed-minded thinking," he said.

"Constitutional law, as an academic discipline, should not be politicised," he said. "Any academic discipline should retain a certain political neutrality."

"At this time, constitutional law is a 'sensitive' topic. As far as I can see, there is basically no public discussion. It seems that everyone is scared."

Prof Zhang's interview disappeared soon after it was posted, to be replaced by a notice saying the content had broken "relevant laws and regulations".

He did not respond to a Reuters e-mail seeking comment.

Many legal scholars took to social media to voice support for Prof Zhang.

Some posted the foreword from his book, in which he stresses the importance of giving people who have suffered injustices the chance to defend themselves using the Constitution.

Some voiced concern that some academics might accuse others of failing to toe the party line.

"The worst part about this incident is that in the current environment, not only are these people not inhibited, but rather they are given a channel, or even rewards," Associate Professor Zhang Taisu, who teaches law at Yale University in the United States, wrote on Weibo, referring to the accusers. REUTERS



A deep-sea slender oarfish at the Uozu Aquarium in Uozu, Japan. PHOTO: THE YOMIURI SHIMBUN/ASIA NEWS NETWORK

Unusual deep-sea fish sightings puzzle experts

TOKYO • A mysterious fish that lives deep below the ocean's surface has been popping up in the waters of Toyama Bay, causing marine experts to scratch their heads.

A deep-sea slender oarfish was caught in a fixed net about 1km off Imizu on Monday and delivered to the Uozu Aquarium in Uozu in the prefecture. That makes three of the fish caught in Toyama Bay just last month, as two slender oarfish were also found on Jan 19 in waters off Imizu and Namerikawa.

Slender oarfish live at a depth of 200m to 300m, and are characterised by long, silvery-white bodies and red fins. The fish is called "ryugu no tsukai" in Japanese, meaning "messenger from the palace of the dragon king".

Monday's fish is 394.8cm long, the fourth-longest to be found in Toyama Prefecture.

According to the aquarium, 20 slender oarfish have been found in Toyama Bay since the first confirmed sighting there in 2009. Four fish were found in 2015, the most in a single year.

"(Finding several in a row) is said to be the forerunner of an earthquake or to be influenced by ocean temperatures, but research is scarce and we don't know the cause," said Mr Satoshi Kusama, 35, a caretaker at Uozu Aquarium.

According to the prefecture's Fisheries Research Institute, the water temperature on the surface of Toyama Bay last month is several degrees higher than usual, while temperatures at a depth of about 200m to 300m are slightly below average.

The fish's carcass is in good condition and will be exhibited today and tomorrow at the aquarium.

THE WASHINGTON POST

Stories about Johor Princess' marriage 'malicious, untrue'



Johor Princess Aminah Sultan Ibrahim and Mr Dennis Muhammad Abdullah got married in August 2017. PHOTO: THE STAR/ASIA NEWS NETWORK

JOHORBARU • Recent stories circulating on social media claiming that Johor Princess Aminah Sultan Ibrahim's marriage is on the rocks have been described as "malicious and untrue" by the royal.

The Johor royal family have said they are upset that irresponsible parties are spreading baseless tales about their personal lives.

In a statement, Tunku Tun Aminah voiced her displeasure at such rumours about her marriage to Mr Dennis Muhammad Abdullah, as well as her alleged business dealings in skincare and slimming products.

"My husband and I are happy, contrary to what the rumours say," she said.

"I have also not endorsed any products, as written by these unscrupulous people who are out to use my name to get attention," she said, adding that complaints lodged

with Facebook were not acted on promptly.

The Johor royal family hoped the social networking site would remove the malicious content, in line with its pledge to ensure that fake news would be dealt with sternly.

It is understood that a police report has been lodged on the matter.

Tunku Aminah married Mr Dennis, a Dutchman, in an elaborate ceremony filled with tradition in August 2017.

She is the only daughter of Johor's Sultan Ibrahim Sultan Iskandar and Permaisuri Raja Zarith Sofiah Sultan Idris Shah.

The wedding at Istana Besar was attended by local and foreign dignitaries, such as Sultan of Brunei Hassanal Bolkiah, and the recently installed Malaysian king, Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin.

THE STAR/ASIA NEWS NETWORK

Hong Kong makes record seizure of pangolin scales, ivory tusks

HONG KONG • Hong Kong Customs officers have busted a massive endangered species smuggling operation from Africa, seizing a record quantity of pangolin scales, along with more than 1,000 ivory tusks, as the authorities step up the fight against illegal wildlife trafficking.

The value of the seized goods – which equates to around 500 elephants and up to 13,000 pangolins – was over HK\$62 million (\$10.7 million), officials said yesterday.

Originating in Nigeria, the shipment was bound for Vietnam, the officials added.

In a separate incident, Customs officials in the northern Vietnamese port of Hai Phong discovered 1.4 tonnes of pangolin scales in a shipping container sent from Nigeria, the state-run Vietnam News Agency reported yesterday.

Last October, Vietnam intercepted more than eight tonnes of pangolin scales and ivory, also from Nigeria, in one of the Southeast Asian country's largest

wildlife trafficking cases in years.

The Chinese territory of Hong Kong, located on the country's southern coast, is a global black spot for wildlife trafficking.

The city is a key transit point, supplying an array of wildlife products including timber, shark's fin and rhino horns across Asia and, particularly, China.

On Jan 16, Customs officers seized about 8,300kg of pangolin scales and 2,100kg of ivory tusks at the Kwai Chung cargo port located in the former British colony.

It was the largest single seizure of pangolin parts in Hong Kong.

Mr Yeung Ka Yan, head of command at Hong Kong's Customs and Excise Department, said the smugglers used a new method to hide the endangered species by a process of "solidification", where they used ice bags and frozen meat to obscure the species.

"The low-temperature environment created by the ice bags and frozen meat helped mask the distinctive

smell of the pangolin scales."

Pangolins, also known as scaly anteaters, are critically endangered. They are coveted for their meat – considered a delicacy – and their scales, which are used in traditional Chinese medicine to treat ailments from cancer to arthritis.

"It is clearly impossible that the pangolin species can withstand such high rates of poaching, trafficking and trade. Eight tonnes is outrageous," said Mr Alex Hofford, campaign manager for conservation group WildAid in Hong Kong.

WildAid estimates that 100,000 pangolins are poached from the wild each year, with all eight species of pangolin in Africa, and especially Asia, now under threat.

Customs officials who worked with their mainland counterparts to intercept the goods, found the species buried under frozen meat inside a refrigerated container.

Officials said two people had been arrested in connection with the case. REUTERS



The value of the seized goods – which equates to around 500 elephants and up to 13,000 pangolins – was more than HK\$62 million (\$10.7 million). PHOTO: EPA-EFE

British firms rush to stockpile goods ahead of Brexit

PMI shows worsening pessimism across manufacturing as fears of no-deal exit rise

BUILDING INVENTORY

The fact that there is still at least some positive growth is almost certainly down to the biggest reading for inventory building in the survey's 27-year history.



ING ECONOMIST JAMES SMITH

LONDON • British factories stockpiled goods last month at the fastest rate since records began in the early 1990s as they braced themselves for a potentially chaotic Brexit in less than two months' time, a business survey showed yesterday.

The IHS Markit/CIPS UK Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) also showed deepening pessimism across the sector, which saw output grow by the smallest amount since July 2016.

While better than the similar readings of manufacturing in France and Germany, the outperformance of British factories was driven by a surge in demand for stockpiling materials ahead of Brexit, said survey compiler IHS Markit.

The findings add to evidence that, as politicians remain deadlocked,

firms are increasingly protecting themselves against the risk of Britain crashing out of the European Union on March 29 without new trading arrangements in place.

Companies are stockpiling everything from medicines and textbooks to ice cream and prosecco.

The biggest supermarket companies this week warned the government of significant disruption and rising food prices if there is a no-deal outcome.

The British pound slipped against the United States dollar after the PMI fell to 52.8 from 54.2 last December, a three-month low and below the consensus forecast in a Reuters poll of economists for 53.5.

The stocks of purchases index rose to the highest level seen in a Group of Seven country.

"The fact that there is still at least some positive growth is almost certainly down to the biggest reading for inventory building in the survey's 27-year history," ING economist James Smith said. "After all, we

are so close to Brexit day and an economically disruptive 'hard' Brexit remains firmly on the table."

Prime Minister Theresa May, under pressure from her own Conservative Party, wants to reopen a Brexit treaty with the European Union to replace a contested Irish border arrangement, something Brussels has rejected.

Investors have urged the government to ensure an orderly exit from the club it joined in 1973.

Almost one in three British firms is thinking of moving some operations abroad because of Brexit, a survey from the Institute of Directors in industry body showed yesterday.

And on Thursday, figures showed investment in Britain's car industry halved last year. "The underlying trends in output and new orders remained lacklustre at best," Mr Rob Dobson, director at IHS Markit, said.

IHS Markit said there was a "clear risk" that the manufacturing sector – accounting for 10 per cent of British economic output – will go into recession.

Export orders were flat, the PMI showed, reflecting a slowdown in the global economy.

British factories cut jobs slightly as backlogs of work contracted at a faster pace last month and the survey's gauge of optimism hit a 30-month low, again reflecting Brexit worries and weakening growth in continental Europe.

These are among the last key data points before the Bank of England announces its next interest rate decision and forecasts next Thursday.

REUTERS, BLOOMBERG

SEE EDITORIAL A30 & BUSINESS C3

Macron's approval ratings picking up

PARIS • Has French President Emmanuel Macron turned a corner?

Two months ago, his approval ratings were tumbling. Yellow Vest protests were shaking France with the backing of the public. And polls showed Mr Macron's party would finish behind Ms Marine Le Pen's anti-EU movement in May's European elections.

Now, his ratings have picked up, the Yellow Vest protests have fizzled, and Mr Macron has overtaken Ms Le Pen in election polls.

"What counts is mobilisation, and in this period, it's Macron's electorate that's been remobilised," said Mr Bernard Sananes, president of polling company Elabe. "After doubting the leadership of their chief, in the past few weeks, they seem to have rediscovered their confidence."

Mr Macron has been re-energised by a return to the rough and tumble of retail politics.

To push back against the Yellow Vests, he called a series of so-called national debates that have involved marathon sessions streamed live on French television, with the President fielding voters' questions on everything from the wealth tax to speed limits.

Not only have the debates given him free air time, but he has recaptured the feisty tone that helped

win him the 2017 election.

An Elabe poll released on Wednesday showed most French (76 per cent) still think he is arrogant. But they also think he is dynamic (70 per cent) and even courageous (57 per cent).

Meanwhile, turnout and support for the Yellow Vests are declining. Police said 69,000 people took part in the 11th weekend of protests last Saturday, compared with hundreds of thousands who were turning out at the end of last year.

Internationally, he is also being more assertive. When Egyptian President Abdel Fatah al-Sisi visited Paris last October, Mr Macron dodged an invitation to comment on human rights.

In Cairo last weekend, he told Mr Sisi there is no excuse for his crackdown on dissent and then reprimanded Japan for the jail conditions of former Renault chairman Carlos Ghosn in Tokyo.

A monthly poll by Odoxa research institute on Jan 24 said Mr Macron's popularity rose 3 percentage points to 30 per cent in January.

An Ifop poll released the same day said his approval rating jumped 4 percentage points in a month to 27 per cent in January.

BLOOMBERG



Opposition leader and self-proclaimed "acting president" Juan Guaido, seen here with his daughter Miranda and wife Fabiana Rosales, has accused socialist leader Nicolas Maduro's security forces of going to his home and trying to intimidate his family. PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Global powers disagree over rightful Venezuelan leader

CARACAS • Global jostling has intensified between countries that want Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro in power and those trying to force him to resign, as opposition leader Juan Guaido made overtures to his rival's allies Russia and China.

The European Parliament recognised on Thursday Mr Guaido as the de facto head of state in a largely symbolic move that heightened international pressure on Mr Maduro.

Separately, the bloc agreed at a meeting of foreign ministers in Bucharest on Thursday to lead an international contact group with South American nations to help re-

solve Venezuela's political crisis by seeking new elections, European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini said.

Despite accusing Mr Maduro of stifling democracy, the European Union was nervous over the precedent Mr Guaido has set by declaring himself interim leader. Hence, it was reluctant to follow the United States and most Latin American nations with immediate recognition of Mr Guaido as Venezuela's leader.

Meanwhile, the 35-year-old Mr Guaido argued that Russia and China's interests would be best served by switching sides and back-

ing him instead in Venezuela, an Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries member which has the world's largest oil reserves but is in dire financial straits.

Mr Guaido said he had sent communications to both Russia and China, which are Venezuela's top foreign creditors and support Mr Maduro on the United Nations Security Council despite worries about the cash-strapped country's ability to pay.

"What most suits Russia and China is the country's stability and a change of government," Mr Guaido said. But Russia issued a

statement yesterday that it did not recognise Mr Guaido as Venezuela's president.

The intense pressure on Mr Maduro is led by the United States, which along with most other countries in the Western Hemisphere, recognises Mr Guaido as the country's legitimate interim president, arguing that Mr Maduro stole his second-term election.

Meanwhile, Mr Guaido said on Thursday that elite security forces went to his home to threaten his family, heightening fears for his safety. The police's special action force, FAES, had gone to his home

to interview his wife, Mr Guaido said during a speech at the Central University of Venezuela in Caracas.

"At this moment, the dictatorship believes that it will intimidate us," Mr Guaido said, with his wife by his side.

Mr Guaido said he had a 20-month-old daughter at home and would be holding FAES accountable for "whatever they do to my baby". He told officials, "Do not cross the red line."

But the National Police tweeted it was "totally false" that there had been a search of Mr Guaido's family.

REUTERS, AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Three people charged in LA for operating birth-tourism scheme

NEW YORK • Three people who operated multimillion-dollar birth-tourism businesses in Southern California have been arrested in the biggest federal criminal probe ever to target the thriving industry, in which pregnant women come to the United States to give birth so their children will become US citizens.

The businesses coached their clients to deceive US immigration officials and pay indigent rates at hospitals to deliver their babies, even though many of the clients were wealthy, investigators said.

Some Chinese couples were charged as much as US\$100,000 (\$S135,000) for a birth-tourism

package that included housing, nannies and shopping trips to Gucci.

A tip sheet for customers, titled Strategies To Maximise The Chance Of Entry, recommended stating on a visa application that pregnant mothers intended to stay at the "five-star Trump International Waikiki Beach" hotel, to convince immigration officials that they were well-to-do vacationers, not mothers travelling with the intention of giving birth on American soil, investigators said.

Grand jury indictments unsealed on Thursday in the US District Court in Los Angeles brought the total number of people charged in the schemes to 19, including both business operators and clients. But

some of those targeted in the indictments are not currently in the US.

The appeal of bearing an American child, long associated with immigrants who enter the country illegally, has spurred a birth-tourism industry that now caters to people from all over the world.

The industry is growing at a galloping pace, especially among Chinese nationals experiencing uncertainty over their country's long-term economic prospects.

The number of businesses in operation is undoubtedly much larger than the three agencies targeted in the latest indictments in the Los Angeles area, said Mr Mark Zito, assistant special agent in charge of Immigration and Customs Enforce-

ment's Homeland Security Investigations in Los Angeles.

"We are talking about three take-downs in LA, when there are probably 300 (such businesses)," Mr Zito said. "We have seen more businesses pop up."

Dongyuan Li, a resident of Irvine, California, who ran a business called You Win USA, is accused in the indictment of renting about 20 units in a luxury apartment complex in Irvine under the names of people who did not occupy them as part of an "illegal international birth-tourism scheme".

Li was arrested on Thursday, along with the operators of USA Happy Baby, another agency associated with birth tourism, according

to the indictment: Michael Wei Yueh Liu and Jing Dong.

While the agencies charged in the investigation cater mainly to Chinese parents, Mr Zito said investigators have also found evidence of Russians heading to the north-east and Nigerians travelling to Texas for the sole purpose of having American children. The Middle East is also a growing generator of birth tourism, investigators said.

There are no official figures for how many babies are delivered to tourists on American soil.

In a 2015 report, the Centre for Immigration Studies, a group that supports restricting immigration, puts the number at about 36,000 annually. NYTIMES

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WORLD

Move could spark new arms race, mark end of decades of efforts to reduce nuclear arsenals

Jonathan.eyal@gmail.com



Russian servicemen at a briefing on Jan 23 for foreign military attaches and journalists, on the new cruise missile 9M729, which Russia says does not violate the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, as the US claims. PHOTO: EPA-EFE

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An official of the Salvation Army hugging a homeless person during a cold wellness check-up in Chicago on Thursday.



Gas-burning heaters placed on railroad tracks in Chicago on Thursday. Record amounts of natural gas are being used to fight the cold.



US Coast Guard staff using a boat as an ice breaker on the Hudson River, between the towns of Kingston and Poughkeepsie, in New York, on Thursday.

Over 20 dead as US Midwest endures arctic conditions

Predictions of warmer weather bring cold comfort as frostbite fears make being outdoors potentially deadly

CHICAGO • Tens of millions of Americans braved arctic-like temperatures as low as minus 49 deg C that paralysed the US Midwest and were blamed for at least 21 deaths.

Warmer-than-normal weather was on the way, but that offered little comfort to vulnerable populations such as the homeless and elderly enduring cold that caused frostbite in minutes and made being outside potentially deadly.

Officials across multiple states linked numerous deaths to the frigid air.

The death toll rose from a previously known 12 after at least nine more people in Chicago were reported to have died from cold-related injuries, according to Dr Stathis Poulakidas, a doctor at the city's John H. Stroger Jr Hospital.

Dr Poulakidas, a trauma specialist, said the hospital had seen about 25 frostbite victims this week.

He said the most severe cases risked having fingers and toes amputated.

Among those believed to have died from the cold was University of Iowa student Gerard Belz.

The 18-year-old was found unresponsive on campus early on Wednesday just a short walk from

his dorm, according to university officials.

Police told a local television station that they believed the cold played a part in his death.

The wind chill at the time that officers found Mr Belz was minus 46 deg C, according to the National Weather Service.

The bitter cold was caused by the mass of air known as the polar vortex drifting south from its usual position over the North Pole.

Homes and businesses used record amounts of natural gas to fight the cold, according to financial data provider Refinitiv. Utilities appealed to consumers to conserve energy to prevent power outages.

In Detroit, General Motors suspended operations at 11 Michigan plants to cut natural-gas consumption. Fiat Chrysler Automobiles cancelled a shift on Thursday at two of its plants.

Water mains froze in Detroit, Chicago and parts of Canada, and power outages were reported in Iowa and Wisconsin.

Nearly 1,700 flights had been cancelled in Chicago by Thursday afternoon. Airport crew worked in 15-minute increments on the tarmac to avoid frostbite.

Rail service Amtrak planned to begin partially restoring service after cancelling on Wednesday all lines in and out of Chicago.

The sub-zero temperatures were expected to lift over the weekend, but the misery would not end quickly in the roughly dozen states most affected.

"We are not done yet. We've got another 24 hours where the weather will be at dangerous levels," Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer told a news conference.

REUTERS, AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

WORST NOT OVER YET

We are not done yet. We've got another 24 hours where the weather will be at dangerous levels.

”

MICHIGAN GOVERNOR GRETCHEN WHITMER

SEE BIG PICTURE A34



Lake Michigan in Chicago was frozen over on Wednesday. The bitter cold, with temperatures as low as minus 49 deg C, was caused by the mass of air known as the polar vortex drifting south from its usual position over the North Pole. PHOTOS: REUTERS, EPA-EFE, NYTIMES



The frigid cold did not stop a resident of Detroit, Michigan, from playing in the snow with his American Eskimo puppy on Thursday. Midwesterners have been given stern warnings to wear extra layers or, better yet, stay indoors, as schools and businesses remained closed.



A mostly frozen Bryant Park fountain in New York City on Thursday, as record low temperatures spread across the Midwest and Eastern states, crippling transport services.

US warns of Beijing's network control

US envoy alerts Europe of security concerns from using Chinese telecoms equipment

BRUSSELS • China seeks to take control of Western data and networks, the United States ambassador to the European Union said, in the latest warning from Washington to its allies that they should think twice before using equipment from companies such as Huawei Technologies.

"China is working to establish itself as a cyber power through illegal frameworks and control over data and networks," American envoy Gordon Sondland told a telecommunications conference in Brussels.

Chinese laws require its state-owned and private companies to cooperate with and share data with Chinese intelligence and security, giving rise to US security concerns, he said on Thursday.

The US has been pushing European allies such as Germany to shun telecoms suppliers "subject to foreign government control".

President Donald Trump's administration sent officials to Berlin in December to step up pressure on Chancellor Angela Merkel's government

over Huawei, while the US embassy said allies and partners are being urged to be vigilant in ensuring network security, including when carriers award equipment contracts.

The warnings may be having an impact. Last week, the EU's digital chief urged the bloc's member states to consider the risk of partnering Chinese companies like Huawei.

In an interview, Mr Andrus Ansip, European Commission vice-president for digital affairs, said Chinese data laws have increased the risk in dealing with Chinese companies in Europe.

The concern voiced by Mr Sondland and Mr Ansip centre on China's National Intelligence Law, passed in 2017. The law requires any organisation and citizen to support and assist national intelligence in their investigations and to keep information related to such investigations.

Huawei has fought back against allegations that it is an enabler for Chinese espionage, and said that blacklisting the Chinese company with-

out proof will hurt the industry and disrupt new high-speed technology.

Huawei has previously said it had commissioned a legal opinion to analyse the consequences of the law.

The opinion says the law does not require it to cooperate with state intelligence if it would contradict the legitimate rights and interests of individuals and organisations, a spokesman said.

On Tuesday, US prosecutors filed criminal charges against Huawei, alleging it stole trade secrets from an American rival and committed bank fraud by violating sanctions against doing business with Iran.

Huawei is one of the leaders in developing the next generation of network technology, known as 5G. Some countries have sought to limit the company's influence, with Australia banning Huawei equipment from carriers' planned 5G networks.

The US has made the security of networks and services a priority – and this has implications for 5G, said Mr Sondland. "This is not a decision about price or quality. This is a decision about whether or not to allow malign actors to take control of your national telecommunications system," he said. BLOOMBERG



Chinese telecoms equipment giant Huawei Technologies has fought back against United States allegations that it is an enabler for Chinese espionage. US Ambassador to the European Union, Mr Gordon Sondland, says Chinese laws require its state-owned and private companies to cooperate with and share data with Chinese intelligence and security, giving rise to US security concerns. PHOTO: BLOOMBERG

Some British unis stand by Huawei despite security concerns

LONDON • A number of universities in Britain are standing by Chinese tech giant Huawei despite security concerns raised by other Western bodies, including the United Nations and Nato.

Several organisations in Britain, including Oxford University and Prince Charles's personal charity the Prince's Trust, severed ties with the technology company recently.

National mobile phone network Vodafone said it will temporarily halt use of the company's equipment in its core mobile-phone networks, and telecoms company BT said it would remove Huawei equipment from its 4G network.

But University of Edinburgh and Edinburgh Napier University, which have teaching and research partnerships with Huawei, and Police Scotland, which uses the firm's broadband devices, have rejected concerns around the security of Huawei products.

Huawei makes equipment such as base stations, switches and routers, as well as consumer products such as smartphones. But there has been concern from some Western nations that the Chinese government could use Huawei's technology for espionage, an allegation the company and the Chinese government have rejected.

"We use mobile Internet devices by the manufacturer Huawei with the Internet service provided by Vodafone," said Police Scotland. "This service does not directly connect to our network."

Huawei has partnered with a number of British universities on academic research in recent years.

The University of Edinburgh has received £5.1 million (\$59 million) in its partnership with the tech firm for a laboratory dedicated to data research. "As with any research partnership that we undertake, this has undergone a rigorous process of due diligence and is the result of long-term collaboration between experts at the University of Edinburgh and Huawei," said a university spokesman.

Edinburgh Napier University, which collaborates with Huawei in information and communications technology, said: "Our relationship... is focused on teaching programmes rather than research projects."

Huawei has also made sizeable donations and investments for technology projects at other universities, including at University of Surrey's 5G Innovation Centre, engineering school Imperial College London and at Manchester University's National Graphene Institute.

"We have no plans to change our relationship with Huawei but will monitor developments," said Manchester University, referring to Huawei's £90 million investment in the institute.

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SCIENCE



A self-portrait taken in June last year by Nasa's Curiosity rover at the Gale crater, at the centre of which stands Mount Sharp, a mound rising more than 4.8km high. PHOTO: NYTIMES

How Nasa's Curiosity rover weighed a mountain on Mars

With some technical improvisation, scientists work out that Mount Sharp is surprisingly light

A mountain on Mars that is almost as tall as Mount Denali in Alaska appears to be surprisingly light, scientists have reported.

For more than four years, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (Nasa) Curiosity rover has been exploring Mount Sharp, located within an ancient meteor impact crater known as Gale and rising more than 4.8km high. Now, measurements of tiny

changes in gravity, recorded by the rover as it climbed in elevation, could help solve the question of how the mountain formed.

The official name of the mountain is Aeolis Mons, but mission scientists have nicknamed it after geologist Robert P. Sharp, a Mars expert who died in 2004. It consists of layer upon layer of sedimentary rock, which offer an easy-to-read history book of Martian geology.

That was one of the attractions that led Nasa to choose the site for the Curiosity mission, which landed on Mars in 2012.

Some scientists surmised that the 155km-wide Gale crater was once a lake that slowly filled with sediment, which was then blown away by winds, leaving Mount Sharp. Others suggested that particles blew in from other parts of the planet and piled up at the centre of the crater in the shape of a mountain.

In the new research, published in the journal Science, the gravity measurements indicated that the rocks beneath Curiosity were not solid

but porous, lowering their density. This finding suggested that the crater was never completely filled with sediment, because the porous rocks would not have been strong enough to support all of the weight.

That conclusion fits in with the notion that both hypotheses of Mount Sharp's formation are partly true, said Dr Ashwin R. Vasavada, the mission's project scientist and an author of the Science paper. Its bottom may consist of carved-out lake sediments, and the top part, of windblown particles.

The findings were the result of a technical improvisation, using sen-

sors intended to provide engineers information on the rover. Doing so effectively added a new scientific instrument to Curiosity.

The brainstorm came from professor of earth and planetary sciences Kevin W. Lewis of Johns Hopkins University and a member of the mission team. He realised that devices such as smartphones have chips that measure the forces of acceleration. This sensor, known as an accelerometer, can measure changes in the pull of gravity. On Earth, geologists use variations in gravity to probe for underground features such as earthquake faults.

The official name of the mountain is Aeolis Mons, but mission scientists have nicknamed it after geologist Robert P. Sharp, a Mars expert who died in 2004. It consists of layer upon layer of sedimentary rock, which offer an easy-to-read history book of Martian geology. That was one of the attractions that led Nasa to choose the site for the Curiosity mission, which landed on Mars in 2012.

"Wouldn't it be wild if we had something like that on Mars?" said Prof Lewis, lead author of the Science paper. Then he realised there were indeed accelerometers on Mars. The rover was using such devices to track the tilt of the vehicle as it moved across the surface.

Those measurements provided a record of the force of gravity on Curiosity. The researchers found that gravity waned slightly as Curiosity climbed about 300m in elevation. But it was less than what would have been measured if Curiosity had been hoisted 300m into the air because of the additional gravitational attraction from the mass of the mountain.

For a person who weighs 68kg on Earth (just 26kg on Mars because of the weaker gravity), climbing Mount Sharp would shed about 2.8g.

The researchers calculated that the bedrock under Curiosity had a density of about 1,000 pounds per cubic foot. However, the minerals that make up the rocks were about 70 per cent more dense than that. This led Prof Lewis and his colleagues to conclude that the rocks must be porous.

Geology professor John P. Grotzinger of the California Institute of Technology, who was the project scientist during the rover's first three years on Mars, said Prof Lewis' idea to tap into the data was "a great example of real scientific creativity". But he was less certain of the conclusions. Curiosity's examination of the rocks at the surface suggests that sediment grains are tightly cemented together, not porous. He also noted sizeable swings in the gravity measurements. That means that the material beneath Mount Sharp might not be as uniform as assumed.

"You just have to somehow invent a geologically plausible scenario," Prof Grotzinger said. "To me, it leaves some wiggle room." NYTIMES

Seeking superpowers in the axolotl genome

The axolotl, sometimes called the Mexican walking fish, is a cheerful tube sock with four legs, a crown of feathery gills and a long, tapered tail fin.

It can be pale pink, golden, grey or black, speckled or not, with a countenance resembling the "slightly smiling face" emoji.

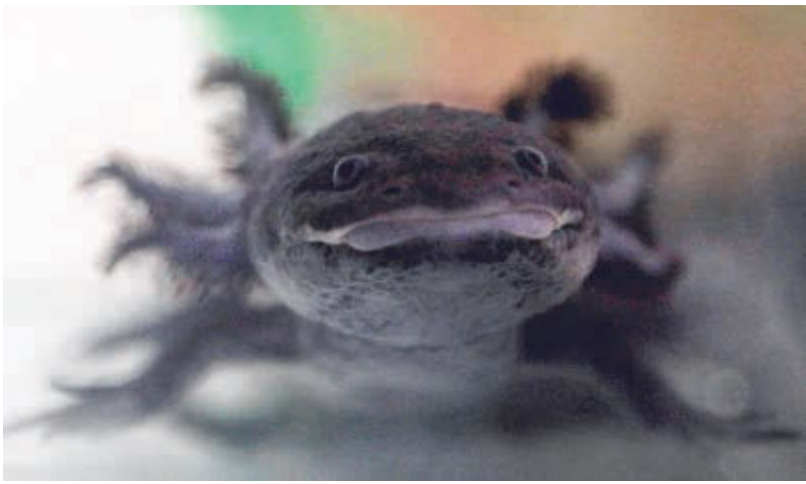
Unusual among amphibians for not undergoing metamorphosis, it reaches sexual maturity and spends its life as a giant tadpole baby.

According to Aztec legend, the first of these smiling salamanders was a god who transformed himself to avoid sacrifice. Today, wild axolotls face an uncertain future. Threatened by habitat degradation and imported fish, they can be found only in the canals of Lake Xochimilco, in the far south of Mexico City.

Captive axolotls, however, are thriving in labs around the world. In a paper published in Genome Research, a team of researchers has reported the most complete assembly of DNA yet for the striking amphibians. Their work paves the way for advances in human regenerative medicine.

Many animals can perform some degree of regeneration, but axolotls seem almost limitless in their capabilities. As long as you do not cut off their heads, they can "grow back a nearly perfect replica" of just about any body part, including up to half of their brain, said Dr Jeremiah Smith, an associate professor of biology at the University of Kentucky and an author of the paper.

To understand how they evolved these healing superpowers, Dr



A team of researchers has reported the most complete assembly of DNA yet for the axolotl, which can regenerate almost any body part. PHOTO: REUTERS

Smith and his colleagues looked to the axolotl's DNA.

At 10 times the size of the human genome, the axolotl genome was no small beast to tackle. "This thing's huge," said Dr Melissa Keinath, a postdoctoral fellow at the Carnegie Institution for Science in Baltimore and an author of the paper.

Building off a previous study, Dr Keinath and her colleagues mapped more than 100,000 pieces of DNA onto chromosomes, the structures that package DNA in the nucleus of each cell. Their axolotl genome is the largest genome to be assembled at this level.

The scientists used an approach

called linkage mapping, which relies on the fact that DNA sequences that are physically close together on a chromosome tend to be inherited together.

To identify axolotl-specific DNA, the researchers juxtaposed axolotls with tiger salamanders, which are close relatives. Specifically, they crossed axolotls and tiger salamanders, then backcrossed these first-generation hybrids with pure axolotls.

Tracking patterns of gene inheritance across 48 of these second-generation hybrids, the researchers were able to infer which sequences of DNA belonged to axolotls and where they physically sat along the amphibian's 14 chromosomes (humans have a greater number of chromosomes, but the axolotl's are much larger). It was like "putting together 14 linear puzzles", said Dr Randal Voss, a professor of neuroscience at the University of Kentucky and an author of the study.

In the process of validating their results, they identified a gene mutation that causes a commonly stud-

ied heart defect in axolotls, demonstrating that their research will speed up the process of scanning the axolotl genome for mutations in the future.

Ultimately, knowing how DNA is positioned along chromosomes "allows you to start thinking about functions and how genes are regulated", Dr Voss said. For instance, much of the genome consists of non-coding DNA sequences that turn genes on and off. Often, these non-coding sequences occur on the same chromosome as the genes they interact with.

"Once these relationships are known, then we can ask questions about whether the same kind of controls happen in other animals, like humans," said Dr Jessica Whited, a professor and limb regeneration expert at Harvard Medical School who was not involved in the study.

Overall, she added, that will help scientists understand whether there are predictable ways to "render humans more like axolotls", fantastic regenerators of the animal kingdom. NYTIMES

Endangered Milky Storks (right), wading birds native to South-east Asia, are further threatened due to cross-breeding with their more common cousin, the Painted Stork. ST FILE PHOTO



Cross-breeding threatens at-risk stork species: NUS

The conservation of the Milky Stork (*Mycteria cinerea*), an endangered wading bird native to South-east Asia, is threatened due to cross-breeding with its more common cousin, the Painted Stork (*Mycteria leucocephala*), researchers from the National University of Singapore (NUS) have discovered.

"Apart from habitat loss and fragmentation, extinction through hybridisation is one of the major threats to endangered species," said the research lead, Assistant Profes-

sor Frank Rheindt from the Department of Biological Sciences at the NUS Faculty of Science.

The research, which was conducted with Wildlife Reserves Singapore, was published in the journal Biological Conservation.

The scientists analysed tissue samples of 46 captive and wild storks, and their results showed significant genomic "contamination": More than half of the sampled storks were affected by "genetic infiltration" from the Painted Stork.

Although originating from a limited number of introduced Painted Storks, these hybrids were now an integral part of both the wild and captive Singapore and southern Peninsular Malaysia stork population, NUS said in the same statement.

The study was the first to provide an estimate on the population genomic status of the endangered Milky Stork in Singapore, and the findings could contribute to the design of effective solutions for conservation management of the globally

at-risk species, said Prof Rheindt.

The team recommended identifying and isolating hybrid storks in bird parks, zoos and the wild locally from pure Milky Storks to prevent cross-breeding, and conducting thorough genetic analysis to ensure the purity of an individual stork in any planned breeding programme or release.

Other recommendations included removing hybrids from the wild and releasing genetically pure Milky Storks.



Pahu in her new home at a Sumatran rhino sanctuary in Indonesia, after being rescued from her threatened habitat and isolation. Sumatran rhinos like Pahu are extremely unique and uniquely endangered, says the writer. PHOTO: WWF-INDONESIA

ScienceTalk

Don't let the Sumatran rhino disappear

New coalition working to find, relocate and breed these animals to increase their population

Jonathan Baillie

Scientists and conservationists could search the forests of Indonesia for years and never get a glimpse of one of the Sumatran rhinos that once roamed freely throughout South-east Asia.

But on a quiet Sunday last November, after years of searching and another six months of staking out specific locations, a team of conservationists found Pahu – a small female Sumatran rhino – and began the process of rescuing her from her threatened habitat and isolation in the wilderness of Indonesian Borneo.

That day, Pahu (who was named after the river in the habitat where she was found) began a journey to help save her species.

With a team of veterinarians and conservationists working around the clock, Pahu made an arduous journey as a fleet of trucks and bulldozers carried her slowly over muddy roads to her new home.

Pahu is now the first resident of a Sumatran rhino sanctuary in Kutai Barat district in the East Kalimantan province of Indonesia.

Sumatran rhinos like Pahu are extremely unique and uniquely endangered. One of five different rhino species left on the planet, the Sumatran rhino is the closest living relative of the woolly rhino – a species that lived tens of thousands of years ago alongside the woolly mammoth – and is the smallest of all living rhino species.

The hairiest of all rhinos, its coat can be short and bristly, or wild and

shaggy. It is even known to “sing” and is the most vocal of the five rhino species.

But after decades of poaching and the destruction of the forests it calls home, this special species faces the risk of extinction that grows more dire by the day. In 2015, Sumatran rhinos were declared extinct in the wild in Malaysia. Now, there are only about 80 Sumatran rhinos left in the world, and the remaining dozens of rhinos left live in Indonesia, where their isolation from one another puts them in extreme danger of total extinction.

Because they live in such fragmented populations (some consisting of only two to three rhinos), it is difficult for the animals to meet and breed. The longer female Sumatran rhinos do not become pregnant, the higher the risk that they will develop reproductive issues that prevent them from breeding at all. With diminishing odds on their survival in the wild, we decided to take action.

The conservationists, veterinarians and scientists who rescued Pahu last November were deployed by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and are part of a new coalition to save the species.

This operation was the first major project of the ambitious conservation breeding programme that aims to prevent the species from imminent extinction by finding, relocating and breeding these rhinos to increase their population, and eventually return them to the wild.

Leading the charge against this imminent extinction crisis, the government of Indonesia has developed an emergency action plan that established a national conservation breeding programme for the Sumatran rhino. In support of this monumental effort, the National Geographic Society, a global non-profit group, helped establish the Sumatran Rhino Rescue last September alongside WWF, The International Rhino Foundation, Global Wildlife Conservation and the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

This effort is the first-of-its-kind partnership to provide the resources, expertise and training needed to save this species.

An undertaking such as this is extremely challenging, risky and costly. Transporting one large animal is always a tricky process, and we still need to find and rescue many more, in order to ensure the species’ survival in the long term.

ABOUT THE SPECIES

STATUS:
Critically endangered

POPULATION:
80

SCIENTIFIC NAME:
Dicerorhinus sumatrensis

HEIGHT:
1m to 1.5m

WEIGHT:
600kg to 950kg

LENGTH:
2m to 4m

HABITATS:
Dense highland and lowland tropical and sub-tropical forests

Sumatran rhinos are the smallest of the living rhinoceroses and the only Asian rhino with two horns. They are covered with long hair and are more closely related to the extinct woolly rhinos than any of the other rhino species alive today. Calves are born with a dense

covering that turns reddish brown in young adults and becomes sparse, bristly and almost black in older animals. Sumatran rhinos compete with the Javan rhino for the unenviable title of most threatened rhino species. While surviving in greater numbers than Javan rhinos, Sumatran rhinos are more threatened by poaching. There is no indication that the population is stable, and just two captive females have reproduced in the last 15 years. The Sumatran rhino once roamed as far away as the foothills of the Eastern Himalayas in Bhutan and eastern India, through Myanmar, Thailand, possibly to Vietnam and China, and south through the Malay Peninsula. Two different subspecies, the western Sumatran and eastern Sumatran, cling for survival on the islands of Sumatra and Borneo. Experts believe the third subspecies is probably extinct. Source: World Wide Fund for Nature

tionction, we need more organisations, foundations and individuals to support this effort.

An effort of this magnitude will require an estimated US\$30 million (\$\$40.5 million) to support search, rescue and conservation breeding operations. The National Geographic Society and our founding partners have each contributed US\$1 million to this effort and are looking for others to join us.

It is clear that the need to take action for species like the Sumatran rhino is growing each day.

In the past 50 years alone, actions like poaching, habitat degradation and human-wildlife conflict have led to the loss of more than 60 per cent of wildlife on the planet.

To prevent a global extinction crisis, scientists have shown that we need to set aside between 25 per cent and 75 per cent of the planet for nature, with many suggesting that an important first step is to protect 30 per cent by 2030.

This is why the National Geographic Society is supporting the Wyss Campaign for Nature – a US\$1 billion investment to help communities, indigenous peoples and nations conserve 30 per cent of the planet in its natural state by 2030 – to help achieve this goal by creating and expanding protected areas, establishing ambitious international conservation targets, investing in science and inspiring conservation action around the world.

Efforts like Sumatran Rhino Rescue and the Wyss Campaign for Nature are vital to the idea that is central to the National Geographic Society’s mission and should be to all others we share the earth with: to move towards a planet in balance.

We hope you will join us.

• The writer is executive vice-president and chief scientist at the National Geographic Society.

NTU researchers have found a way to extract pectin from durian husks and turn it into biodegradable packaging materials. PHOTO: LIANHE ZAOBAO



A green reason to love the durian

Researchers at the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) have found a way to turn durian husks into biodegradable packaging materials.

Pectin is a natural part of the human diet, and can be found in fruits and vegetables. Most fruits – like pears and apples – contain large amounts of pectin.

While pectin can be used to make jam hold its structure, or in some medical adhesives, Professor William Chen, director of NTU’s food science and technology programme, has found a way to extract pectin from durian husks and turn it into biodegradable packaging materials.

To do so, the husks are cut, then ground and shredded to produce a cellulose powder.

This is then used to create sheets of the biodegradable material.

The material is shiny and slightly cloudy – and can be degraded within a month if it is put in the soil. If required, the material’s colouring can be changed by introducing colour into the cellulose shreds.

Prof Chen and his team are in talks with several food and beverage companies to work on commercialising the material.

Cheryl Teh

While pectin can be used to make jam hold its structure, or in some medical adhesives, Professor William Chen, director of NTU’s food science and technology programme, has found a way to extract pectin from durian husks and turn it into biodegradable packaging materials.

THE STRAITS TIMES

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The Straits Times says

Brexit vote: MPs must put nation first

If there is a consensus among all actors in the Brexit drama, it is that Britain's headlong departure from the European Union on March 29 is undesirable. That convergence of opinions provides the best chance for resolving the snowballing impasse that would otherwise result in a no-deal Brexit. A vote on Tuesday gave Prime Minister Theresa May the backing from MPs to renegotiate the withdrawal treaty with Brussels. In particular, she seeks to redo the backstop. With this, she intends to appease eurosceptic members of her Conservative Party opposed to her deal on the grounds that Britain loses its right to formulate a sovereign trading policy if it agrees to the backstop. The mechanism is meant to prevent the im-

position of post-Brexit checkpoints at the only land border between the United Kingdom and the EU. Checkpoints, it is feared, will disrupt the flow of goods along the Irish border and revive memories of the Troubles, thus also undermining two decades of peace since the Good Friday accords.

It is unclear what "alternative arrangements" can replace the backstop. But Mrs May hinted at seeking a time limit or a "get out" clause to allow the UK to withdraw unilaterally from the backstop. Technological approaches – for instance, using drones to inspect trucks that cross the border – have also been talked about. This is perplexing: The EU already clarified that the backstop is temporary and technology that can replace check-

points is not immediately serviceable. Yet, Mrs May's contention is that a majority will coalesce around her deal if the backstop were tackled.

The EU has thus far resisted suggestions that it would be amenable to revising the treaty that was drafted after two years of negotiations. It continues to see the backstop as the best way to preserve the interests of its member-nation, Ireland. Brussels could, however, hand Mrs May a lifeline and avoid disruptions for European economies too by signing off on some changes that make the deal a more saleable proposition for Mrs May. Instead of rewriting the treaty, a codicil with some new arrangements might suffice. Failing that, the other option for Mrs May is to court Mr Jeremy

Corbyn by dropping her resistance to a Customs union with the EU – the price Labour wants for its support.

The next day of reckoning falls on Feb 14 when Parliament votes again on her Brexit plan. MPs will need to pit their partisan concerns against constructive actions that embody the best interest of their constituents – leavers and remainers alike – and their country. Politicians unable to agree on the way forward can hold to ransom the country's prosperity and security and dent Britain's image as a dependable nation. No matter if the 2016 Brexit referendum is seen as a self-inflicted catastrophe or a vital course correction, the moment now is for repairing the damage.

The plastic poser for Singapore

How environmentally effective is the growing push to forgo plastic bags and straws? Time for some serious cost-benefit analysis.

Euston Quah and Christabelle Soh

For The Straits Times

At the start of each year, many people make New Year resolutions to improve their behaviour. Spurred by appalling images of the harm plastics inflict on marine life, some Singaporeans' resolutions may involve a greater effort at recycling and reducing their reliance on single-use plastics.

However, while a desire to go green is commendable, twinning emotion (outrage, remorse, compassion) with reason and hard facts would likely achieve a better outcome for the environment than sentiments alone. This calls for understanding the costs and benefits of our actions, so we make choices that yield the highest net benefits. To do that, we need to have a better understanding of the environmental problems we face.

THE PROBLEM WITH PLASTICS

A major problem with plastics is the harm they do when they enter water bodies and end up maiming or killing sea animals, such as turtles and whales who ingest them or get tangled up in the debris, or when they block out sunlight that sustains marine plant life, which in turn sustains the creatures that feed on them.

There is much that should be done at a global level, but we must also recognise the limits of what reducing plastic waste in Singapore can do to alleviate the problem. To understand why, consider how Singapore deals with its garbage.

Here, all household rubbish – plastics, paper and food – is incinerated after collection and then disposed of in the Pulau Semakau landfill.

Furthermore, care is taken to minimise potential hazards posed by the landfill. For example, it is lined with a membrane to prevent leakage of harmful substances. A wastewater plant treats the water displaced by the ash, so that it can be discharged safely into the sea.

Given how we manage waste disposal in Singapore, reducing the use of plastic bags, drinking straws and the like will have limited impact on marine life as the

detritus is not likely to end up discharged in its original state into the sea.

That said, there is value in reducing plastic waste as overall waste reduction would extend the lifespan of the Pulau Semakau landfill.

When it was first opened in 1999, the landfill was envisaged to last till 2046, based on the assumption that individual Singaporeans discarded 0.9kg of rubbish each day. However, at our current rate of waste generation, the landfill will run out of space by 2035. Waste reduction of all types, plastics included, would therefore push back this deadline.

GOOD INTENTIONS ARE NOT ENOUGH

While reducing the quantity of waste will extend the lifespan of our landfill, not all "green" actions are environmentally friendly or effective in such a straightforward fashion. This is because the costs and benefits of such actions can be far more complicated than first meets the eye.

A good example of this is replacing single-use plastic bags with a reusable bag.

A study by the Denmark Ministry of Environment and Food found that because the production of cotton also incurs significant environmental costs, cotton grocery bags have to be reused thousands of times to be more environmentally friendly than single-use plastic bags – a figure that is unlikely to be reached.

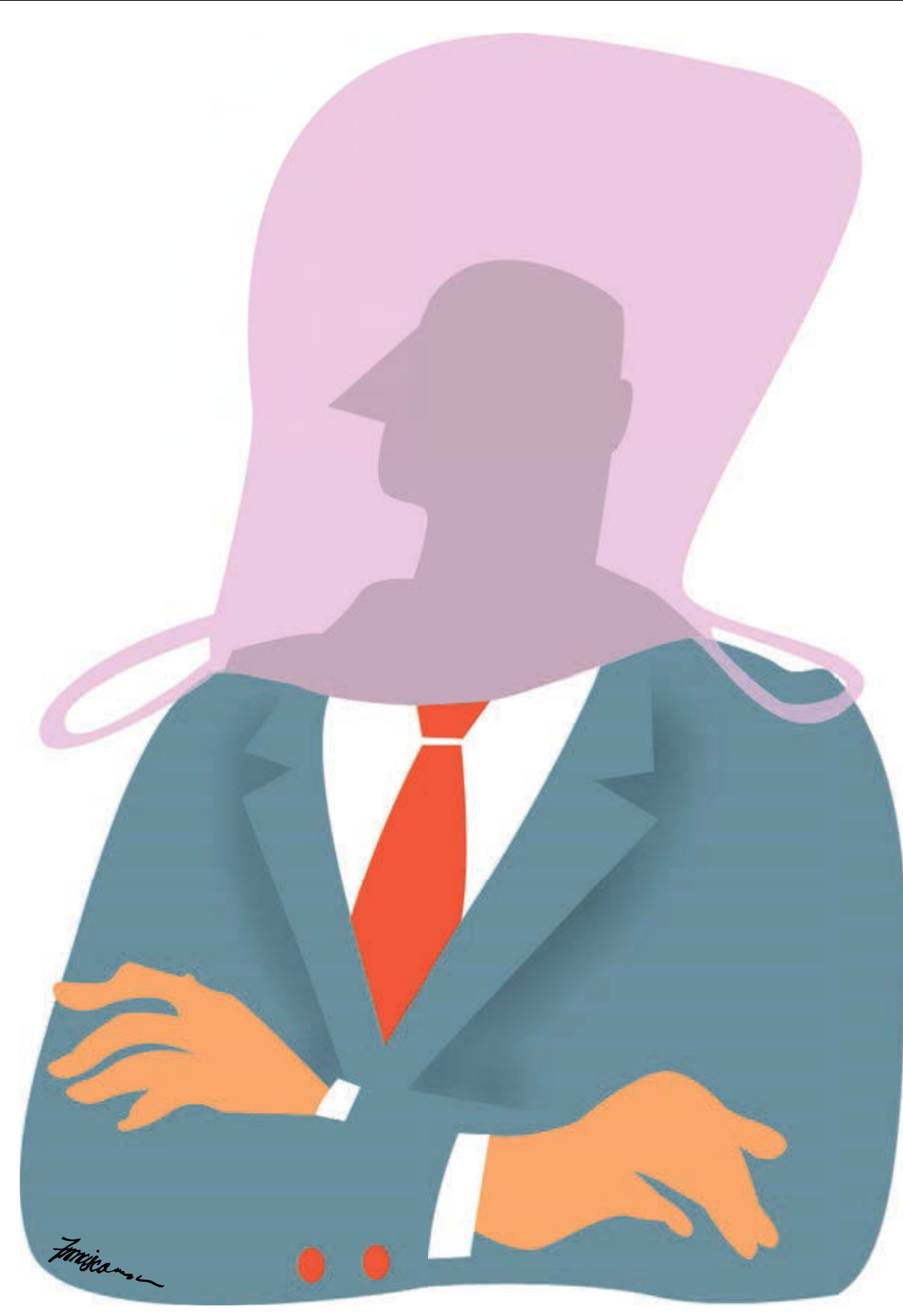
The same argument applies to using metal straws to replace plastic straws – the environmental cost from producing metal straws needs to be accounted for.

The recycling of plastics is also not as effective as it is often made out to be. To comprehend why, we need to understand the economics of recycling.

Recyclers incur costs while processing waste material for sale as recycled products. Plastic is a poor candidate for recycling as it has a high recycling cost and low resale value.

There are a few reasons for plastic's high recycling cost.

First, much of our plastic waste comprises plastic food containers, which contain biological materials. As such, they will need to be cleaned before they can be sent for recycling. This costs money.



Second, there are many different types of plastics. They would need to be sorted before recycling. The difficulty is that different plastics also tend to have similar physical properties – for example, all are non-magnetic. As a result, separating them is, by and large, still an expensive manual process.

On the revenue side, the demand for recycled plastics is directly correlated with the price of oil because crude oil is used to produce new plastics.

The lower the price of oil, the more uncompetitive recycled plastics are. With the development of fracking, low oil prices are here to stay. Thus, recyclers will not earn much revenue from selling recycled plastics.

Additionally, as the quality of plastic degrades the more it is processed, the poorer quality of recycled plastics makes it an even harder sell.

Apart from the economics, plastic recycling also creates pollution problems. It is in response to both the poor economics and the environmental cost that the Chinese government banned the import of plastics for

By understanding the context-specific benefits and costs of our actions, we can minimise the environmental impact of consumption. Similarly, rational decision-making in crafting public policies would yield the largest effects.

recycling last year.

The upshot is, if it is not in the interest of recyclers to recycle plastics, placing plastic waste into recycling bins will not yield any environmental benefit as it would simply be dumped instead.

A BETTER WAY FORWARD

But all is not lost. There are better ways of dealing with all the garbage we produce.

"Reduce plastics, recycle metal and paper" is a useful guide on how to manage waste material to create

a larger net environmental benefit.

For plastics, the focus should be on reducing its use. Instead of using plastics and putting a salve on our conscience by placing it in a recycling bin later, it would be better not to use plastics at all. For instance, dining in rather than opting for takeaways would reduce significantly the use of plastics. Making use of reusable bags and straws as frequently as possible helps offset the cost of their production.

Focusing recycling efforts on metal and paper makes sense as both materials are recycled more easily. Recycling them is also commercially viable as it costs more to produce them from raw materials. Recycling paper and metal products would also mitigate other environmental problems such as deforestation, pollution and climate change-inducing carbon emissions.

Action by individual consumers will not be sufficient to achieve a zero-waste economy. State intervention will be required. As with individuals, governments will have to assess their options rationally and decide on those that yield the largest net benefits.

For example, many governments have either banned the use of plastic bags or introduced a charge to discourage their use. Hong Kong, for example, saw the use of plastic bags fall by 90 per cent following a 50 HK cent (8.5 Singapore cent) surcharge introduced in 2015.

For Singapore, choosing between putting a price on plastic bags, regulation and some mixture of both would need to take into account benefits and costs of each option.

For instance, the extent of the benefits of pricing plastic bags would depend on how responsive consumers are to prices, while the cost would include worsening inequity as such a surcharge would be regressive since it would take up a larger share of a poor person's income.

If pricing is to be part of the solution, the price would have to be carefully calibrated based on the benefits and costs of alleviating and worsening different problems.

THINKING GREEN, THINKING RATIONALLY

And for that to happen, we would need good information for guidance. There is certainly scope for interdisciplinary efforts towards that goal. Findings from scientists on the environmental effects of specific policies can be combined with research on their economic impact to produce accurate and complete information.

Additionally, a comprehensive approach to waste reduction requires measures that go deeper into the problem and provide longer-term solutions. It is essential to work with and encourage producers with incentives to reduce unnecessary packaging and to improve the economics of recycling.

This will include providing sufficient support for research and development in terms of developing materials that leave a smaller environmental footprint when disposed of, reducing the cost of recycling through creating cheap and scalable ways to sort plastics, and developing ways to increase the resale value of recycled materials. The recent breakthrough by NUS scientists in producing aerogel from recycled plastic bottles is one example. Here, too, careful assessment should prevail in rendering support for projects that show promise.

In conclusion, waste management is a severe but solvable environmental problem, so long as we approach it rationally.

By understanding the context-specific benefits and costs of our actions, we can minimise the environmental impact of consumption. Similarly, rational decision-making in crafting public policies would yield the largest effects.

Good information underpins sound decisions big and small. It is therefore imperative that more be done to support research on what works best for Singaporeans as they go about doing their bit for the environment.

stopinion@sph.com.sg

• Euston Quah is a professor of cost-benefit analysis and the head of economics at Nanyang Technological University. He is also the president of the Economic Society of Singapore. Christabelle Soh is an economics teacher at a local school.

Field notes

Marathon fever hots up in China

Number of runners outpaces race spots available in this multibillion-dollar industry. But cheating scandals are a blot.



Chong Koh Ping

China Correspondent
In Shanghai

When Shanghai native Summer Li, 36, was in university, she didn't exercise much but was made to run a 5km stretch of the Shanghai Marathon in 2003. It was scheduled to be part of a live broadcast but there were not enough participants.

"Now, it's basically impossible to enter (the race)," said Ms Li, who works as a sales manager for a German multinational in Shanghai.

Today, the Shanghai Marathon is one of the hottest road races in China, with the full marathon race – covering a distance of 42.195km – consistently oversubscribed.

Last year, more than 92,000 people signed up for the race when there were only 25,000 spots, which meant for every four people who applied, only one got to run.

Ms Li caught the long-distance running bug in 2015 when she ran the Shanghai Marathon to accompany her then boyfriend, who is now her husband.

"I had wanted to sign up for the half marathon, but it was hard to get a spot," she said.

Since then, in the three years between 2016 and last year, she has run 12 full marathons. For the second half of last year, she averaged a race a month in a foreign city, the most recent one being the Singapore marathon in December.

In Beijing, Singaporean Ang Tiong Lin, 50, vice-president of business development at an IT firm, has also caught the running bug, motivated by the different local sports groups.

"I also wanted to test my ability and prove my endurance and fitness level," said Mr Ang, who has lived in the capital city for more than 14 years.

Last year, he started taking part in road races and ran five half marathons and one full marathon in Chinese cities such as Beijing, Wuhan and Wuxi. Before this, the farthest he had run in a race was 10km.

Ms Li and Mr Ang are part of the millions of people in China who have found a new hobby in taking part in road races in recent years.

REACHING A FEVER PITCH

According to figures by the Chinese Athletic Association (CAA), there were only 13 marathons held in 2010. The number ballooned to more than 1,100 in 2017, with five million entries. This list counted only road races with more than 800 runners and cross-country runs with more than 300 contestants.

The association expects the number of races to top 1,900 by next year, with more than 10 million runners crossing the start line. And the industry is estimated to rake in US\$19 billion (S\$25.6 billion) annually by then, up from US\$10 billion in 2017.

"The year 2016 saw the explosive growth of marathons among the masses," said Professor Wang Xueli, director of Tsinghua University's Centre for Development of Sports Industry.

She noted that the sport's popularity started to pick up from around 2011 even though China had started organising such races as early as 1981 with the Beijing Marathon, now considered the most prestigious running event in the country and which has the best brand recognition.

Other than big brand-name races like the Beijing and Shanghai marathons, most major city races are also regularly oversubscribed, and require balloting to get a spot, said Ms Zhou Xi, 39, a runner with a local running club in Shanghai.

Market analyst Alina Ma told The



Mr Paul Mui (front row, in yellow), originally from Hong Kong, is the founder of the running group Lao Mei – which means "Old Mr Mui" – in Shanghai. Pao tuan, or running groups, in China play a big part in spreading the popularity of the sport. They are usually informal interest groups, unlike running clubs overseas that tend to be more professional. PHOTO: LAO MEI RUNNING GROUP

GROWING IMPROVEMENT

In 2009, if you ran a marathon under three hours for men, people would look at you like a monster. And now, at three hours, you take it for granted that if you train a little bit, you can run under three hours. It has attracted a lot of talented people to come out and run, and they run fast. Not only the men, but also the ladies.



MR PAUL MUI, the founder of a running group in Shanghai. The group meets every Sunday afternoon at Century Park and about 50 to 60 people show up.

Straits Times that fitness is "currently trending in China", with running, walking and jogging as the most common sports activities.

"The popularity of running is due to its being relatively easy to pick up, particularly among amateurs, and (the fact that it) does not require any special training, equipment or venue," said Ms Ma, associate director of research at Mintel, a market research firm.

Efforts made by leading sports brands such as Nike and adidas, whose marketing campaigns introduce new and advanced features of running shoes and apparel, are a factor as well, she added.

Analysts and observers noted that many people are drawn to the gruelling nature of marathons as it helps them hone willpower and develop self-discipline.

Runners tend to have high incomes and high education and the core group tends to be older, above 35 years old, they observed.

GRASSROOTS EFFORTS

Prof Wang said *pao tuan*, or running groups, in China play a big part in spreading the popularity of the sport.

Unlike running clubs overseas that tend to be more professional, these Chinese groups are usually informal interest groups.

Mr Paul Mui, 61, is the founder of



Shanghai native Summer Li at the Singapore Marathon in December. Ms Li has taken part in many overseas marathons and, for the second half of last year, she averaged one race a month in a foreign city. PHOTO: COURTESY OF SUMMER LI

one such group in Shanghai which meets every Sunday afternoon at Century Park. About 50 to 60 people show up.

On New Year's Day, he celebrated the 10th anniversary of his group with a 14km run along the Huangpu River at Shanghai's Lujiazui financial centre.

His group includes 30 men who can run a full marathon under three hours, and six women who can do the same in under 3hr 18min.

"In general, we are among the top runners in Shanghai," he said.

Mr Mui, originally from Hong Kong, emphasised that his group is "strictly a running group" that is non-commercial and non-profit-oriented. There are no sponsors.

He has funded the activities, including a yearly informal 5km relay race, out of his own pocket.

Ten years ago, he started with just

one member when he posted on an online running community site to invite people to join him for training. They ran 20km together.

With increased interest, the standards have also soared.

Back then, he was one of the fastest runners around. "In 2009, if you ran a marathon under three hours for men, people would look at you like a monster. And now, at three hours, you take it for granted that if you train a little bit, you can run under three hours," he said.

"It has attracted a lot of talented people to come out and run, and they run fast. Not only the men, but also the ladies," he added.

In Hangzhou, Ms Fan Bo, 32, a manager at a foreign bank, founded a running group just for women in April last year.

Named Happy Unicorn, the group is meant to help women destress through exercise.

China's running craze



SCAN TO WATCH



<http://str.sg/marathon>

Ms Fan had benefited from the advice, camaraderie and support of local running groups shortly after she picked up running in 2015 and felt it was time to give back.

She thinks the social element of running together can help motivate and encourage beginners to train more "scientifically" so as to avoid injuries.

HITTING SPEED BUMPS

But as the sport gains popularity, incidents such as cheating, deliberate obstruction of athletes, injuries and even deaths have started to gain prominence.

In December last year, the CAA handed out warnings and punishments to several marathon organising committees for violations, including mass cheating by 258 runners at the Shenzhen half-marathon in November.

Some 18 runners wore fake bibs, while three were impostors and 237 took shortcuts but were caught out by traffic cameras and local photographers.

The CAA said it will consider whether to impose additional penalties after the organising committees and companies submit their reports on how they intend to prevent such incidents from happening again.

It is time to regulate the marathon industry in China and to promote the healthy and orderly development of the sport, said the CAA.

More than 15 people were reported to have died of heart attacks during marathon races in China over the past four years.

Mr Lu Jun, chief operating officer of First Respond, a social enterprise, urged marathon organisers to pay more attention to runners' safety in a recent commentary.

"The growth of China's marathon industry has largely outpaced efforts to regulate it. Even as demand for health and emergency response services has spiked, investment in equipment and

training has lagged," he wrote.

His organisation has provided first-aid training and emergency management services to over 300 marathons in China since 2013.

"Ultimately, the safety of an event depends on organisers' commitment to, and awareness of, these issues. If they try to cut costs on health and safety, the risk of participating rises accordingly. This cannot be allowed to happen," he emphasised.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Runners like Ms Zhou in Shanghai also hope that races can get more professional. Often, the distances at smaller races are not accurate. There is also a lack of mile markers, sufficient supplies and emergency stations.

Prof Wang of Tsinghua University noted that more Chinese runners are going overseas for races and more foreign runners are coming to China to race.

Local organisers are also working to develop unique or more unusual races that play up the local terrain or conditions. An example is the Great Wall Marathon that is popular with foreign runners.

The running times of amateur participants are set to improve further and it would not be surprising if, soon, these hobbyist runners can start to vie for a spot to run in the Olympics, said Prof Wang.

Ms Zhou, who took part in the 2018 Boston Marathon, will be racing the Tokyo Marathon next month. She aims to improve her time to under three hours.

As for Ms Li, whose personal best is 4hr 10min, she is content with using marathon racing as a chance to explore foreign cities.

She said: "I don't set goals or give myself pressure. I tend to combine my races with sightseeing, where I eat and drink to my heart's content but I exercise as well."

kohping@sph.com.sg

Google v carmakers in ‘robotaxi’ war

Tech giant’s Waymo has a big lead but traditional carmakers may yet be saved by an emerging ecosystem of niche companies offering specialised services.

Patrick McGee

FRANKFURT • General Motors celebrated being the world’s largest carmaker for the 76th straight year in 2007.

It was sitting on US\$25 billion in cash. Eighteen months later, it was bankrupt.

The automotive industry is among the most capital-intensive in the world: If the economy sours, assets turn into liabilities overnight as factories churning out thousands of cars begin to haemorrhage cash. So when toxic mortgage securities blew up in 2008, causing a recession, banks performed terribly – but carmakers fared even worse.

That is what makes motor-vehicle consultants at Bain so worried. They fear that carmakers are about to be hit with a one-two punch: First, they project a United States recession in the next 12 to 18 months. Then, increasing numbers of baby boomers will retire, causing a structural decline so big that, they warn, US car sales could shrink from more than 17 million last year to just 11.5 million by 2025 – the same level seen in 2008-2009, which caused GM and Chrysler to go bankrupt and Ford to suffer a US\$14.6 billion loss.

“The collapse in car sales in the coming years could be as severe as it was during the great recession,” says Bain partner Mark Gottfredson. “Only this time, the sharply lower demand will be permanent.”

But there is hope. If carmakers play their cards right, they could be saved by what GM has called “the biggest business opportunity since the Internet”. The potential saviour

is the rise of shared, driverless “robotaxis”, which Bain expects to become mainstream in some large cities in six to eight years.

This new market, virtually non-existent today, promises to be huge. Analysts at UBS estimate that its revenue in 2030 will be between US\$1.3 trillion and US\$2.8 trillion, a forecast based on robotaxis accounting for 12 per cent of new car sales. By 2050, when they are likely to be far more common, chipmaker Intel projects a “passenger economy” worth US\$7 trillion. Global vehicle sales stand at US\$2 trillion (S\$2.7 trillion) today.

Car brands typically earn US\$2,000 from a vehicle sale. That is just one cent per kilometre over the lifetime of a vehicle, whereas for robotaxis “the potential is 20 to 25 cents per kilometre”, says McKinsey consultant Andreas Tschiesner. “So there is huge potential to capture more.”

To realise this potential, the industry will need to update its entire business model. The challenge for carmakers is to gain the expertise in self-driving algorithms, in-car entertainment, streaming services and fleet management for ride-hailing that will be central to this new era.

NEW BUSINESS MODEL NEEDED

Luckily, there has been an explosion of small companies developing the skills and technologies that carmakers can make use of. According to McKinsey, US\$211 billion has been invested into mobility start-ups since 2010. Only 7 per cent came from the carmakers. But the majority was financed by venture capital and private equity

funds, creating a swarm of small players who have an incentive to sell their breakthrough technology up the traditional value chain.

The risk is that the carmakers fail to integrate this new technology. Citi analyst Itay Michaeli warns of “an industry race the likes of which we haven’t seen before”.

If the carmakers fail, they could find themselves relegated to the status of a supplier. Or worse. “Many may not survive,” warns Mr Gottfredson.

Waymo, the Alphabet self-driving unit that began as a Google project, is widely seen as the leader in this new landscape. On two key indicators – kilometres driven autonomously and “disengagements”, or the average mileage driven without human intervention – it has built a commanding lead since its founding in 2009. And with at least 600 of its vehicles driving more than 40,000km a day, it is perfecting its algorithms in a way that could blindside the competition.

Last year, UBS said Waymo “will dominate” the operating systems for autonomous vehicles, taking “60 per cent of the total projected revenue pool in 2030”.

Banks are already giving it sky-high valuations. In 2017, Morgan Stanley valued it at US\$70 billion – roughly the same as Volkswagen, the world’s largest carmaker by sales.

Last year, the bank realised it had not taken into account the potential for Waymo to license its technology and enter logistics, where it could help Walmart deliver goods to better compete with Amazon, for example. It revised its valuation to US\$175 billion.

Last month, Jefferies financial analysts went further. On the assumption that Waymo can take a 2 per cent share of all distances driven worldwide in about 10 years, it valued the group at US\$250 billion. That is more than Ford, GM, Fiat-Chrysler, Honda and electric

carmaker Tesla combined. “I firmly believe that within five years the majority of carmakers will come to Google and say, ‘we need your help’,” says Mr Brent Thill at Jefferies.

GOOGLE’S ADVANTAGE

The threat of Waymo is not that it will build better cars. It has no need to. Instead it is ordering vehicles from Chrysler and Jaguar – effectively turning them into suppliers – and then fitting them out with self-driving software and hardware built in-house.

But its potential goes beyond superior self-driving capabilities. Once robotaxis are mainstream, Alphabet can collect data from Google Maps and Search, entertain with YouTube and the Play Store, offer advice through Google Home smart speakers and use its software know-how to manage fleets. Aside from the vehicle itself, Waymo is a vertically integrated “closed system”, says UBS.

“This will influence advertising, the media and the entertainment business,” Mr Thill says. “It’s not just the autonomous technology, it’s all the components that Google brings to the car. This is why it is putting so much investment into the living room, because it wants the car to feel like your living room.”

Carmakers are scrambling to respond. Volkswagen has linked up with Ford, while arch-rivals BMW and Mercedes have pooled their mobility efforts. In 2016, GM paid US\$500 million for a stake in Lyft, the ride-hailing group, and it spent more than US\$1 billion to buy Cruise, a self-driving company.

Bain’s Mr Gottfredson says the Cruise acquisition had looked expensive for a start-up with fewer than 50 employees. But with Japan’s SoftBank and Honda since buying stakes, its valuation has ballooned to US\$14.6 billion.

DATA VALUE CHAIN

These deals, however, are merely the tip of the iceberg. Beneath the car brands, an entire ecosystem of niche companies has spurred into existence. Known as the “data value chain”, these groups specialise in the software, sensors, data processing and navigation needed to make autonomous cars a reality.

None has the willpower, resources or vision to take on Waymo. Instead, they are forming clusters, exercising “swarm intelligence” to independently work towards the

same collective goal of creating a safe, driverless experience.

New players include Israeli companies such as Iguazio, which specialises in real-time data processing for ride-hailing apps, and Foresight Automotive, whose four-camera system, it claims, can detect obstacles in all weather conditions, regardless of whether the object has been seen before. “If an alien walks out of a UFO, we’ll detect it,” says Foresight vice-president Doron Cohadier.

The implications of this ecosystem are profound. It suggests the carmakers can catch up to the likes of Waymo without being the best-in-class in the new technologies. They merely need to be competent enough to know who is best – and then partner them. “This is why they have a very good chance to win this fight,” says Mr Adi Pinhas, chief executive of Brodmann17, an Israeli start-up that uses machine learning to cut down the computing power needed to digest data. “We just do data processing, others just do mapping, others do sensing. When you have these large, specialised teams working on these building blocks, and the carmakers are at the top orchestrating, they get faster progress.”

Mr Bob Lutz, former vice-chairman of GM, adds: “I believe the huge virtual network of thousands of little companies will ultimately deliver the goods, if people know how to take advantage of it. Collectively, they will overpower any monolith.”

Mighty AI, a Seattle-based start-up with 85 employees, helps autonomous vehicle cameras and sensors to “make sense of the raw data” by detecting objects and labelling them. What is unique is that it takes real-world footage and then crowdsources the mundane task of tagging images to more than 500,000 people who use their app. “To label one image might be 50 tasks,” says chief executive Daryn Nakhuda. “That isn’t something you want your data scientists, computer visualisation teams or manufacturers thinking about.”

Via, a US ride-pooling app founded in 2012, has collected data from 50 million rides worldwide. This has enabled it to match cars with passengers quickly, and make sure they are fuelled or charged at the optimal times. It has partnered Daimler in Europe. “We are uniquely focused on this one thing,” says Mr

Daniel Ramot, Via’s founder. “It’s a problem we have been solving the last six years. It’s quite complex. Sometimes the autonomous vehicle guys ignore all this and just think about the algorithms.”

When Google’s self-driving car project began a decade ago, this data value chain did not exist, but it is emerging fast. McKinsey’s database of mobility start-ups includes 1,180 companies. Israel alone is home to more than 400, including Mobileye, the vision group Intel paid US\$15.3 billion for in 2017. Mobileye is developing an open platform for autonomous driving with help from BMW, Fiat-Chrysler and suppliers Delphi and Magna.

The various joint ventures, partnerships and takeovers are “combinations which you could not have imagined just a few years ago”, says Mr Axel Schmidt, head of global automotive at Accenture. Parts of this emerging network have already helped GM gain wide acclaim in the industry for Supercruise, its hands-free driving technology. A key enabler for this service came from Ushr, a company with 60 employees which provided GM with high-definition maps covering every major highway in Canada and the United States.

Ushr mapped highways to an accuracy of 15cm using laser-based lidar (light detection and ranging) technology. While other self-driving technologies have terabytes of data in the cloud that get transferred to the car when needed, Ushr reduced 200,000km of high-definition maps to a 300MB file that stays in the car, says Mr Chris Thibodeau, Ushr general manager.

“GM has approached autonomous driving from a systems-integration perspective,” Mr Thibodeau says. “It’s not about the technology of one company; it’s about taking data from the camera, maps, the sensor, and making it work well together.”

HUB AND SPOKE MODEL

This ability to select the best partners and integrate different technologies is a major advantage for the carmakers, says Mr Thomas Muller, head of development for autonomous driving at Audi. “There is not just one company that can do everything. You can follow that approach, but it will be expensive and risky,” Mr Muller says.

Mr Dan Glotter, chief executive of OptimalPlus, a big data analytics company, says the traditional pyramid structure of the value chain is giving way to a hub and spoke model in which carmakers sit in the centre and interact with all levels, including the makers of semiconductors and radar systems. This gives carmakers an advantage because playing the role of integrator is what they have been doing for decades. “BMW has an order-of-magnitude more experience dealing with the supply chain (than software companies),” he adds.

Mr Ronny Cohen, chief executive of Israeli start-up Vayavision, which builds 3D models of a car’s surroundings by fusing raw data from the camera, lidar and radar systems, says working with carmakers is the goal for suppliers. “My business model is the licensing fee,” he says. “They manufacture the cars of the world today, so they have the volumes.”

This approach can be dismissed as “outsourcing innovation”, but the benefit is that the enormous risks and costs for new technologies are shared, increasing the chance of success. “Supply chains contain exponentially more expertise and resources than any single company,” says Mr Alex Saric, chief marketing officer of procurement platform Ivalua. “So the most successful organisations will be experts at unlocking the innovation in their supply chains.” FINANCIAL TIMES

Visitors checking out the Waymo car during CES 2019 in Las Vegas last month. The potential saviour of the car industry, says the writer, can be found in the rise of shared, driverless “robotaxis”, which are expected to become mainstream in some large cities in six to eight years. PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE



Let users sell their data to Facebook

Leonid Bershidsky

It is easy to be outraged by the revelation that Facebook has been paying users between the ages of 13 and 35 up to US\$20 (S\$27) a month to allow practically unlimited access to their smartphone usage data. But outrage about the social media giant is so 2017. The latest dubious practice could be an opportunity to consider a more finely tuned business model than the one Facebook uses today.

According to an investigation by tech journalist Josh Constine for TechCrunch, the young users are paid for installing an app called Facebook Research, offered through the beta-testing services

Applause, BetaBound and uTest, not directly by Facebook. The app asks users to install a root certificate, which gives Facebook access to pretty much everything the phone contains, from private message exchanges to location data.

This sounds like spying on young people who may not understand what they’re allowing, and appears to contradict Apple’s App Store policies. After the TechCrunch report came out, Facebook said it would remove the app from the store; it would still be available for Android phones, though.

In a statement, Facebook said the users knew what they were doing; they’d given their permission and taken the money. I’m not going to split hairs about whether Facebook made crystal clear to the users what

level of access they’d be providing. Facebook has a poor record of explaining how much data it collects and how.

That, however, is a moot point for what I’d like to suggest. In the wholesale market for personal data, companies trade or use our information to target advertising. The average value of an active user to Facebook, based on its most recent earnings release, reached about US\$2 per month in the third quarter of 2018; in the US and Canada, it was about US\$9.20. The problem is that while a wholesale market for personal data exists, a retail one doesn’t. That’s a shame.

The actual owners and real-time producers of data – we the people – should have a say in how much our information is worth. Companies that make money from online advertising should give us an explicit opportunity to sell them our data.

The incentive for companies would be that users who sell their data would sign away their privacy through a simple waiver. Like the participants in the Facebook

research programme, they’d knowingly let the social media site get everything it can from their phones. I imagine quite a few people would agree because they already police their phone use so as to have few secrets. Many employers install tracking apps on company phones.

Such contracts, of course, would make it necessary for other users to be able to cut off communications on the platform with people who

The actual owners and real-time producers of data – we the people – should have a say in how much our information is worth. Companies that make money from online advertising should give us an explicit opportunity to sell them our data.

are giving up their data for cash: Message exchanges with them would be exposed. That, however, can be solved with a single checkbox in the settings.

With a broader base of paid users giving up all their data, Facebook could fine-tune its ad-targeting techniques, make better inferences about its entire universe of users and perhaps even run behavioural experiments that otherwise would be considered unethical. It would have blanket permission for all that in exchange for a fee that would, in the end, be determined by the market.

The users who don’t want to participate could remain in the free layer, based on the same rules that determine Facebook’s data collection today. They would still give up some data – as much as Facebook can trick them into releasing. And they’d see more or less precisely targeted ads based on their settings.

I’m also in favour of introducing a third, subscription-based layer, for which Facebook would guarantee no data collection and no ads. The

subscription fees could offset the money paid to people selling their data; theoretically, the point at which this happens would set the market-clearing retail price of our Web privacy.

Introducing the three layers would go a long way towards fixing Facebook’s regulatory problems: It would be hard to argue with a market-based mechanism for setting privacy levels. At the same time, it would allow the company to retain an advertising-based business model, which chief executive officer Mark Zuckerberg has said he prefers to a subscription-based one. Many users, after all, would prefer to stay in the free layer on today’s terms.

Facebook has often objected to regulation, arguing that it would stifle innovation. The company should take a more innovative approach both to people’s privacy preferences and to its business model. Instead of apologising for one privacy invasion after another, it should give users a way to decide how much they value their data.

BLOOMBERG

AI could worsen biases in medicine

Dhruv Khullar

Artificial intelligence (AI) is beginning to meet (and sometimes exceed) assessments by doctors in various clinical situations. AI can now diagnose skin cancer like dermatologists, seizures like neurologists and diabetic retinopathy like ophthalmologists.

Algorithms are being developed to predict which patients will have diarrhoea or end up in the intensive care unit, and the United States Food and Drug Administration recently approved the first machine-learning algorithm to measure how much blood flows through the heart – a tedious, time-consuming calculation traditionally done by cardiologists.

It's enough to make doctors like myself wonder why we spent a decade in medical training learning the art of diagnosis and treatment. There are many questions about whether AI actually works in medicine, and where it works: Can it pick up pneumonia, detect cancer, predict death? But those questions focus on the technical, not the ethical.

And in a US health system riddled with inequity, we have to ask: Could the use of AI in medicine worsen health disparities?

There are at least three reasons to believe it might. The first is a

training problem. AI must learn to diagnose disease on large data sets, and if that data doesn't include enough patients from a particular background, it won't be as reliable for them.

RACE, GENDER DIFFERENCES

Evidence from other fields suggests this isn't just a theoretical concern. A recent study found that some facial recognition programmes incorrectly classify less than 1 per cent of light-skinned men but more than one-third of dark-skinned women. What happens when we rely on such algorithms to diagnose melanoma on light versus dark skin?

Medicine has long struggled to include enough women and minorities in research, despite knowing they have different risk factors for and manifestations of disease. Many genetic studies suffer from a dearth of black patients, leading to erroneous conclusions. Women often experience different symptoms when having a heart attack, causing delays in treatment.

Perhaps the most widely used cardiovascular risk score, developed using data from mostly white patients, can be less precise for minorities. Will using AI to tell us who might have a stroke, or which patients will benefit a clinical trial, codify these concerns into algorithms that prove less effective

for under-represented groups?

Second, because AI is trained on real-world data, it risks incorporating, entrenching and perpetuating the economic and social biases that contribute to health disparities in the first place. Again, evidence from other fields is instructive. AI programs used to help judges predict which criminals are most likely to reoffend have shown troubling racial biases as have those designed to help child protective services decide which calls require further investigation.

In medicine, unchecked AI could create self-fulfilling prophecies that confirm our pre-existing biases, especially when used for conditions with complex trade-offs and high degrees of uncertainty. If, for example, poorer patients do worse after organ transplantation or after receiving chemotherapy for end-stage cancer, machine-learning algorithms may conclude that such patients are less likely to benefit from further treatment – and recommend against it.

Finally, even ostensibly fair, neutral AI has the potential to worsen disparities if its implementation has disproportionate effects for certain groups. Consider a program that helps doctors decide whether a patient should go home or to a rehab facility after knee surgery. It's a decision imbued with uncertainty but has real

In medicine, unchecked AI could create self-fulfilling prophecies that confirm our pre-existing biases, especially when used for conditions with complex trade-offs and high degrees of uncertainty. If, for example, poorer patients do worse after organ transplantation or after receiving chemotherapy for end-stage cancer, machine-learning algorithms may conclude such patients are less likely to benefit from further treatment – and recommend against it.

consequences: Evidence suggests that discharge to an institution is associated with higher risk of re-admission. If an algorithm incorporates residence in a low-income neighbourhood as a marker for poor social support, it may recommend minority patients go to nursing facilities instead of receiving home-based physical therapy. Worse yet, a program designed to maximise efficiency or lower medical costs might discourage operating on those patients altogether.

DOCTORS' CRUTCH

To some extent, all these problems already exist in medicine. American healthcare has always struggled with income- and race-based inequities rooted in various forms of bias. The risk with AI is that these biases become automated and invisible – that we begin to accept the wisdom of machines over the wisdom of our own clinical and moral intuition.

Many AI programs are black boxes: We don't know exactly what's going on inside and why they produce the output they do. But we may increasingly be expected to honour their recommendations.

In my practice, I've often seen how any tool can quickly become a crutch – an excuse to outsource decision-making to someone or something else. Medical students

struggling to interpret an electrocardiogram inevitably peek at the computer-generated output at the top of the sheet. I myself am often swayed by the report provided alongside a chest X-ray or CT scan.

As automation becomes pervasive, will we catch that spellcheck autocorrected "they're" to "there" when we meant "their"? Still, AI holds tremendous potential to improve medicine. It may well make care more efficient, more accurate and – if properly deployed – more equitable.

But realising this promise requires being aware of the potential for bias and guarding against it. It means regularly monitoring both the output of algorithms and the downstream consequences.

In some cases, this will necessitate counter-bias algorithms that hunt for and correct subtle, systematic discrimination. But most fundamentally, it means recognising that humans, not machines, are still responsible for caring for patients. It is our duty to ensure that we're using AI as another tool at our disposal – not the other way around. NYTIMES

• Dhruv Khullar is a doctor at New York-Presbyterian Hospital and an assistant professor in the departments of medicine and healthcare policy at Weill Cornell Medicine.

Why billionaires with big egos dream of being president

Kevin M. Kruse and Julian Zelizer

Former Starbucks chief executive Howard Schultz is the latest big-ego billionaire to toy around with the possibility of running for president.

On television show 60 Minutes on Sunday night, Mr Schultz expressed his frustration with the state of the two major parties and explained he is considering running as an independent next year. But the reaction to his entry has been decidedly lukewarm, if not hostile. At his first campaign event on Monday evening, a heckler shouted: "Don't help elect Trump, you egotistical billionaire," adding an expletive for emphasis.

While the debate over Mr Schultz's possible impact on the election next year will continue to rage in coming weeks, more important right now – with a man who has a big ego and a big wallet already in the White House – is to explain what accounts for the growing number of American chief executives who say they can make what seems to them to be a lateral move to chief executive of the US government.

The phenomenon has become very real in the past few years. While Mr Ross Perot was considered a curiosity when he ran as an independent in 1992 and 1996, brand-name business figures no longer seem unusual in presidential politics. In this election cycle alone, Mr Schultz, Mr Michael Bloomberg, Ms Oprah Winfrey, Mr Tom Steyer, Mr Mark Zuckerberg and Mr Mark Cuban have all been floated as potential challengers to President Donald Trump.

Name recognition, an apparent record of success in business and personal resources were enough for Mr Trump, these candidates seem to say, so why wouldn't it be enough for them? Mr Trump spent US\$66.1 million (\$89 million) of his own money on his 2016 campaign. For billionaires with a bigger bottom line and a larger sense of themselves, such a price seems a bargain too good to ignore.

But while we only now have a plague of big-ego billionaires in politics, the conditions that gave rise to the trend date back to the 1970s.

In the aftermath of Vietnam and Watergate, many voters soured on "experienced" politicians who had betrayed their trust. Liberal Democrats felt president Lyndon Johnson had done them wrong

when he channelled his political capital away from domestic reform and into a disastrous war in Vietnam. Republicans were likewise devastated when they learnt about the ugly underbelly of presidential power as a result of Watergate. During the next four decades, the "outsider" became the most sought-after identity for presidential candidates. Georgia governor Jimmy Carter led the way in 1976 when he made his weak ties to Washington a claim to fame.

As his opponents in the Democratic primary boasted of their decades of experience in Washington, and president Gerald Ford campaigned from the Rose Garden, Mr Carter boasted to voters that he was one of them. With Mr Carter's victory, the message was clear: Being an outsider was in.

Originally, the outsider label was used to burnish the candidacies of leaders who, like Mr Carter, had led governments at the state level: California's Ronald Reagan, Arkansas' Bill Clinton, Texas' George W. Bush. But in recent decades, when even state-level leaders seem tainted by politics as usual, the outsider status has been embraced by those who are truly outside politics, like former pro wrestler Jesse Ventura or film star Arnold Schwarzenegger, who both won races for governor.

In a conservative era that celebrates the virtues of free markets and private enterprise, who could be a better outsider than the businessperson turned candidate?

The rising tide of wealthy candidates is also a direct result of an important Supreme Court decision. Two years after Congress reformed the campaign finance system in response to the revelations of Watergate, the Supreme Court undid some of the changes in the 1976 ruling in Buckley v Valeo. The court maintained some of the new limits on campaign spending, primarily for those who accepted public funds, but it also ruled that candidates had the right to spend unlimited amounts of their own money on their own campaigns.

The decision gave wealthy candidates a tremendous advantage: They could spend as much of their own fortunes as they wanted as long as they didn't accept any public funds.

Self-funded campaigns had the ironic consequence of letting wealthy elites present themselves as populist champions. In 1988, for instance, Democratic businessman Herbert Kohl ran for a Senate seat



Former Starbucks chief executive Howard Schultz (above, left), and former New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg (left) are among the wealthy individuals considering running for the American presidency. PHOTOS: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

pursuing it.) Mr Perot was one of the first to discover the opportunities the new media landscape created.

He announced his candidacy during an interview on CNN's Larry King Live, then promoted his policies with half-hour paid advertisements on television. The cost of such ads – estimated at the time as between US\$150,000 and US\$700,000 each – made them prohibitive for most candidates, but Mr Perot's fortune allowed him to use them to reach as many as 16.5 million viewers at a time.

The US has created these opportunities at the expense of a value once considered essential in elections: political experience. It has thrown out the idea that having worked in government and demonstrated one's qualifications in a lower-level elected office is one of the best measures to see how a person will handle the awesome responsibilities that come with the Oval Office.

We have confused wealth and fame in the private sector with the qualifications that are needed for those who hold public office.

Perhaps the experience the US is now having with the first wealthy business outsider to win the presidency will cause voters – and would-be candidates – to rethink the idea that anyone who has the means to run for office should do so. WASHINGTON POST

• Kevin M. Kruse is a professor of history at Princeton University while Julian Zelizer is a political historian at the same university.

in Wisconsin with a motto that promised he would be beholden only to the voters: "Nobody's Senator but yours."

Numerous governors such as David Walters in Oklahoma and Kirk Fordice in Mississippi likewise came to office directly from the boardroom. In 2019, when the cost of campaigns has reached astronomical levels, extremely rich business people – who have thrived in the era of growing inequality – want to be part of the political action. The phenomenon has also been fuelled by the new media ecosystem that started to take form in the 1970s.

Cable television transformed the news business in significant ways, first with the launch of the original Cable News Network (CNN) in 1980 and the dawn of 24-hour-a-day news cycles and, later, with the rise of staunchly partisan news networks like Fox News, which began in 1996.

At the same time, the Internet produced an endless number of sites devoted to coverage of Washington as well as new forms of social media like Facebook in 2004 and Twitter in 2006 that offered an incessant feed of political news. In short order, a political-media news complex took form that churned

out election-related news 24 hours a day and 365 days a year.

The result has been an ongoing search for content. Producers, reporters, editors and bloggers all need breaking news to keep the attention of their audiences. This creates a ready-made platform for high-profile business people who merely talk about entering a presidential election.

Rich celebrities and whether they might run for office make for good cable segments: Will they run? How would they do? What factors might go into their decision? (Never mind whether they're actually even serious about

BIG PICTURE

WEATHER

Windy, with passing showers in the afternoon.
High 33 deg C Low 24 deg C
24-hr PSI as of 5pm yesterday: 36 to 53 (Moderate)



PHOTO: REUTERS

Standing out in the cold

Some residents in Minneapolis have found something fun to do despite the freezing temperatures that have swathed the American Midwest this week. They are freezing their trousers upright in their yards, such as this display in the suburb of Saint An-

thony, and posting photos of their creations on social media with the hashtag #frozenpants. The idea was started by Minneapolis resident Tom Grotting, 64, who said some of his inspiration came from his childhood, reported Time.com. His parents used to hang

clothes outside to dry, and he found it entertaining to see them freeze in funny shapes. Iowa newspaper Des Moines Register has even given its readers instructions on how to create such ice sculptures successfully. Mr Grotting said that tempera-

tures need to drop to about minus 18 deg C for the trousers to stay upright in place. On Wednesday, the mercury dipped to minus 33 deg C in Minneapolis, resulting in about 100 such sculptures dotting the snowy landscape in several suburbs.

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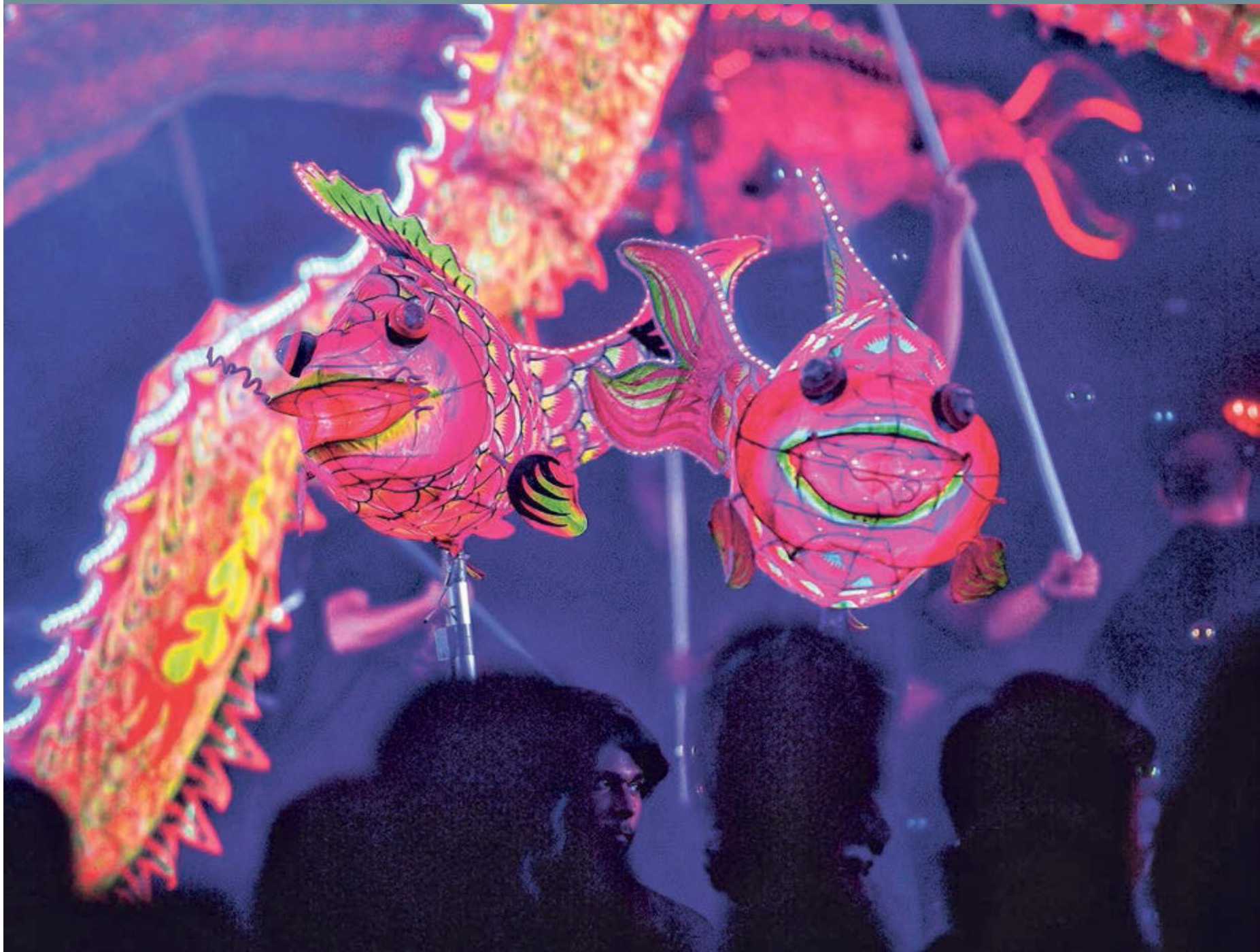
B|HOME

63

NUMBER OF CHILD ABDUCTION CASES THE SINGAPORE CENTRAL AUTHORITY HAS HANDLED SINCE 2011

B2

Spring Surprise to light up the Gardens





Visitors to Gardens by the Bay's Chinese New Year programme this year, Spring Surprise, will be treated to a dance performance that uses lanterns modelled after carps and dragons.

The performance by the 27-member Tian Eng Dragon and Lion Dance Centre will take place at 8pm on Feb 9 and Feb 10 as the finale to Spring Surprise, which starts today. Called Carps Leaping Over The Dragon's Gate, the dance features special choreography that combines Chinese dance, the popular dragon dance and the rarely seen carp dance.

The carp lanterns (left) measure 1.5m in length each, while the dragon lantern (above) is 2m long.

The display at the Supertree Grove in Gardens By The Bay portrays a well-known Chinese legend of a carp that successfully leaps over the celestial Dragon's Gate and transforms into a powerful dragon.

Other highlights at Spring Surprise include the traditional lion dance as well as performances by the Singapore Chinese Orchestra and Ding Yi Music Company.

The programmes are free of charge but admission charges for the Flower Dome, where some of the programmes are held, apply. ST PHOTOS: ARIFFIN JAMAR

SAF signals renewed safety focus: Experts

But they call for more clarity over role of new body being set up to enforce safety

Lim Min Zhang

With the setting up of a new body to enforce safety in the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF), observers said this signals that the SAF is re-newing its focus on safety.

However, they said more clarity is required on how the Inspector-General's Office (IGO), which reports to the Chief of Defence Force, will work with existing bodies that also ensure training safety in the SAF.

On Thursday, the Defence Ministry (Mindef) said the new IGO will be set up with the full authority to scrutinise and enforce safety processes and practices at all levels of the SAF. It will perform audits and checks, and promote safety culture. No details were given on when the new IGO will be set up, its size and composition, or who will head it.

Tanjong Pagar GRC MP Joan Pereira, deputy chair of the Government Parliamentary Committee for Defence and Foreign Affairs, said the move reinforces and builds on the serious view that the SAF has always held towards safety, while acknowledging that details were lacking at this point.

"The IGO will be able to impose greater responsibility on the commanders as well as act as an additional layer of checks on how safety measures are adopted and observed in the defence forces," she said.

Defence blogger David Boey noted that Mindef and the SAF have made a similar move before in forming the Safety and Systems Review Directorate (SSRD) in 2013, after four servicemen died in separate training incidents in 2012.

"While every move that puts safety under the spotlight is welcome, we have to be mindful not to



Mindef said on Thursday that the new IGO will be set up with the full authority to scrutinise and enforce safety processes and practices at all levels of the SAF. ST PHOTO: CHONG JUN LIANG

(think) that such a move would instantly lead to an improved safety culture," said the member of Mindef's Advisory Council on Community Relations in Defence.

The SSRD was preceded by the SAF Inspectorate, which also reported directly to the Chief of Defence Force, Defence Minister Ng Eng Hen told Parliament in November 2012. This was after the deaths of Private Dominique Sarron Lee Rui Feng and Third Sergeant Tan Mou Sheng in separate incidents earlier that year.

Dr Ng said then: "The SAF Inspectorate will set the safety culture across the entire SAF and oversee the individual inspectorates of the three services. In this way, it will promulgate best practices and ensure the robustness of safety-related policies, that they are up to date and sound throughout the SAF."

In March 2013, he gave an update, saying the SAF Inspectorate would be "elevated" to the SSRD, an entity in Mindef that would report directly to the Permanent Secretary of Defence and the Chief of Defence Force. "The directorate will also set up external review panels which will submit recommendations to the Minister for Defence."

One such panel is the External Review Panel on SAF Safety (ERPSS), which consists of nine safety experts and professionals outside Mindef and the SAF.

The first ERPSS was set up in 2013 and the second was inaugurated in

July 2017, headed by director of MMA Offshore Heng Chiang Gnee. The army, navy and air force also have their own safety inspectorates headed by full colonels who report to the respective service chiefs.

Mr Boey suggested Mindef could clarify the terms of reference of the new IGO, its staff and how it would complement these existing outfits.

SAF training safety has come under the spotlight after the death of Corporal First Class (NS) Aloysius Pang on Jan 23 – the fifth reported since September 2017, before which the SAF had four years of zero training- and operations-related fatalities. A Committee of Inquiry led by a State Court-nominated judge was convened on Jan 25 to investigate the death.

Associate research fellow Ho Shu Huang of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies said challenges remain, noting how freak accidents or momentary lapses in judgment by a soldier who is usually safety conscious can still happen.

"Human error cannot be thoroughly policed," he said.

"The SAF might rightfully be setting a very high bar, but because it's so high, the impact of another accident might be even worse as expectations are so high. It may be inadvertently painting itself into a corner because there is no way it can guarantee another accident won't happen in the future."

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As a new measure that allows parents to seek the Immigration and Checkpoints Authority's help to stop their spouse from abducting their child out of Singapore is put in place, senior social affairs correspondent **Theresa Tan** spotlights the lengths to which parents go to find their children and bring them home

HIDE & SEEK

Heartbreaking tales of abduction by a parent when marriage sours

About a month ago, Sam's wife took their three-year-old son and left home in the wee hours of the morning.

Since then, she had stayed away, ignored his messages and transferred their only child to another pre-school. The 36-year-old manager, meanwhile, feared "losing my son forever".

He recalled the first signs of trouble in the marriage a few months before she left. She began to give him the cold shoulder.

"I don't know what happened. I never cheated on her but she suddenly had a change of heart," Sam (not his real name) said.

His wife, a Malaysian, also started taking their son more often to visit her family in Johor Baru – and always without him. The longest they stayed away was almost two weeks and Sam was worried that she would take the boy out of Singapore and disappear forever.

Recently, Sam was granted a stop order by the Family Justice Courts that prohibits his son from being taken out of Singapore without his, both parents' or the court's consent. His lawyer has also asked the Immigration and Checkpoints Authority (ICA) for help to stop the boy from leaving Singapore should his wife attempt to do so.

The couple now communicate only through their lawyers but his wife allowed him to see their son for two hours last Saturday – to his great relief.

Meanwhile, Sam has exhausted his savings after spending about \$20,000 on legal fees.

On Jan 1, a new measure took effect to prevent children from being spirited away from Singapore when their parents' relationship turns sour.

Parents who have been granted a stop order by the court can apply for help from the ICA not to let the child leave Singapore with the other parent.

Parental child abduction is a concern as a growing number of Singaporeans are marrying foreigners. In 2017, 35 per cent of all marriages involving at least one Singaporean were to a non-citizen.

Lawyers interviewed say parents often go to great lengths and exhaust all legal means to find their abducted child. Some hire detectives and even take matters into their own hands to bring their child home.

The root of the problem, they added, is that when the marriage sours, some want to return to their homeland but fear losing their child to the other parent.

Said lawyer Shone Aye Cheng of AC Shone and Co: "Their child is their whole life, so they just take the child first and run."

Lawyer Poonam Mirchandani, of Mirchandani and Partners, recounts a case of a foreign father who searched for more than two years for his seven-year-old daughter, who was taken by her Singaporean mother to Singapore amid a custody battle.

He made several trips to Singapore but could not find the girl. It took him another two years before his online sleuthing led him to his ex-wife's whereabouts.

Ms Mirchandani filed an application in the Family Justice Courts here for the girl to be returned to the country she was living in.

The father also flew to Singapore to see his daughter, to whom he was very close.

She added: "Regrettably, by the time he found his daughter, the psychological harm resulting from manipulation and alienation had already been inflicted on the child."

The girl's hysteria on seeing him

and his fear that she may hurt herself led him not to pressure her to return to their home country, which Ms Mirchandani declined to name.

He next heard from her nine years later, just before she turned 18. She then learnt from her father that her mother had "fed her many lies about her dad" for years, Ms Mirchandani said.

Private investigator David Ng, of DP Quest Investigation Consultancy, said some Singaporean ex-spouses "have requested us to help snatch their child away when we locate him but we are not allowed to do that as that would amount to kidnapping."

One parent who turned to private investigator Raymond Lim, of Apac Investigation & Consultancy, was a senior manager who had married a China national from Shanghai.

Mr Lim said his client initially quit his senior management job to look for his six-year-old son in Shanghai. The mother had taken the boy to her hometown after the courts ordered the boy to live with his father.

After a futile two-month search, he hired Mr Lim, spending more than \$40,000 on fees to find his son. Mr Lim said he tricked the

woman into disclosing her whereabouts by telling her the father had died and left his assets to the boy.

His client then made a police report with the Shanghai police and went with the officers to the home of his ex-wife's family. The woman's mother, who was looking after her grandson, handed the boy to his client, Mr Lim said.

Lawyer Ivan Cheong of Eversheds Harry Elias advises parents to use legal means to reunite with their child. Snatching a child back is traumatic for the kid and may be illegal, even when the child is wrongfully taken out of Singapore.

"Two wrongs do not make a right," he added.

Lawyers say parents can apply for a court order for the child to be returned to them.

It is, however, easier to get a child back when he or she is taken from or to a country that has acceded to The Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction and recognises Singapore's accession to the multi-lateral treaty.

Parents can then apply for a court order under the convention in the country where the abducted child is

taken to.

The convention seeks the prompt return of a child wrongfully removed from the country he was living in, so that decisions about his welfare or custody can be made by the appropriate jurisdiction.

The Singapore Central Authority, which handles such cases here and comes under the Ministry of Social and Family Development, can get the help of other government agencies here to locate the child and persuade the abducting parent to voluntarily bring the child back.

The Singapore Central Authority, which was set up in 2011, has handled 63 cases. As of Jan 10, 61 countries, including Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom, have recognised Singapore's accession to the convention.

Lawyer Gloria James-Civetta of Gloria James-Civetta and Co have urged parents not to alienate their child from the other parent and put the child's interests first.

She said: "It is very easy to lose sight of this, especially with emotions running high in an acrimonious relationship."

theresa@sph.com.sg

Mum fled with twins

With her 10-year-old twin sons, a Singaporean woman fled from the United States, where they were living, to Singapore to escape from her abusive American former husband.

The marriage had ended but they were locked in a bitter custody battle for the boys.

To worsen matters, she realised as the boys were growing up that their biological father was her former boyfriend, and not her former husband, who is a bank executive.

The boys made it clear they wanted to live with her.

To avoid being found by her ex-husband, the trio stayed in hotels in Singapore until their money ran out and she returned to her family's home here, said her lawyer, Ms June Lim of Eden Law Corporation.

Meanwhile, her ex-husband reported her to Interpol for child abduction, flew to Singapore and hired a private investigator, who tracked them down.

The woman eventually complied with the court orders he took out and returned the boys to the US. He fought for their custody – even after learning that they were not his biological children – and the US courts gave him sole custody.

Later, he cut off her access to the twins. She flew to the US to look for them, but was arrested and jailed for a few months because he had earlier reported her to the authorities for child abduction.

The former husband, however, later got into trouble for drug offences and the twins were by then old enough to be allowed to choose who they wanted to live with. Now aged 18, they live with their mother, said Ms Lim.

She added: "These cases are very complicated and very dramatic."

Theresa Tan

EMOTIONAL REACTION

Their child is their whole life, so they just take the child first and run.



LAWYER SHONE AYE CHENG of AC Shone and Co, about a parent doing something illegal – child abduction – for fear of losing the child to the other parent. When the marriage sours – especially one that involves a non-citizen spouse – a spouse may want to return to his or her homeland.



ST ILLUSTRATION: CEL GULAPA



Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs Masagos Zulkifli, with Muis chief executive Esa Masood (left) and Special Needs Trust Company chairman Moses Lee (right), speaking with Muis Special Needs Trust Scheme beneficiary Nazurah Noorabidin and her parents Zarifah Osman and Noorabidin Mahmood. ST PHOTOS: KUA CHEE SIONG



Prime mover driver Mohamad Nahar Johari with daughter Nur Harlina Mohamad Nahar and wife Lenny Marlina Kamsani. Madam Lenny started to worry about her daughter's future a few months before she turned 16 last year.

Muslims receive help to set up trust funds for special needs kin

Muis to sponsor eligible families with initial outlay of \$5,000 needed to set up the trust

Vanessa Liu

A few months before Nur Harlina Mohamad Nahar turned 16 last year, her mother Lenny Marlina Kamsani started to worry for her daughter's future.

The girl is intellectually disabled and needs help with everyday functions such as bathing and brushing her teeth.

Madam Lenny, 34, who works as a shipping coordinator, said: "I worry about who will take care of her when I'm gone. If she's sick or bedridden, will there be a place for her to stay? She won't be able to stay at a hospital, so the only place I can think of is a home."

Six months ago, Madam Lenny decided to set up a trust fund for her daughter with the non-profit Special Needs Trust Company (SNTC),

which was established in 2008 with the support of the Ministry of Social and Family Development and National Council of Social Service.

Aside from trust services, SNTC assists with drawing up a care plan that details possible alternative care arrangements and financial requirements for the disabled person if the primary caregiver is unable to continue.

"With this (trust fund), I know that at least when I'm gone, there will be a home to take care of her until she passes on," Madam Lenny said.

She and her husband, Mr Mohamad Nahar Johari, 37, who is a prime mover driver, found it difficult initially to raise the \$5,000 needed for setting up the trust fund, as they struggled to make ends meet for their family of five.

But then Madam Lenny came to know about the Muis Special Needs Trust Scheme, a collaboration between the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (Muis) and SNTC, aimed at low- and middle-income Muslim families.

"Currently, less than 2 per cent of trusts in SNTC have been set up by Muslim families. The feedback on the ground was that the capital

needed to create the trust was one factor that proved to be challenging for interested families," said Mr Esa Masood, chief executive of Muis.

In April last year, Muis announced that it was allocating \$1 million for the scheme, financed using funds that was paid to Baitulmal – the general endowment fund managed by Muis.

Yesterday, Muis and SNTC signed a memorandum of understanding for the scheme at the Muis Academy in Braddell Road. Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs Masagos Zulkifli, who is also Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, witnessed the signing ceremony.

The Muis special needs scheme will see the Islamic body sponsoring eligible families with the initial outlay of \$5,000 required to set up the trust. Muis will also channel an additional \$5,000 to these families on a one-to-one matching basis to encourage them to take ownership of the trust and plan for regular top-ups.

A hundred families are expected to benefit from the initiative, which will also be applied retrospectively to families with SNTC trusts such as Madam Lenny's.

The scheme will be made available until Dec 31, 2021 and will be open to SNTC's existing Muslim clients who are eligible for it.

liuxyv@sph.com.sg

100

Number of families that are expected to benefit from the initiative

Try being Finance Minister on ST's Budget microsite

Gilaine Ng

This year's Singapore Budget is right around the corner, with Finance Minister Heng Swee Keat set to deliver the statement on Feb 18.

Until then, readers can head to The Straits Times' microsite, which was launched on Thursday, for the latest news and analyses about the upcoming Budget, Web specials and a recap of the 2018 Budget.

Those who are up to the task of managing Singapore's expenses can also challenge themselves in a new interactive game on the site.

Titled Who Wants To Be The Finance Minister?, the game allows players to create a personalised avatar and make a series of policy decisions.

Players are tasked to meet the needs of different groups in each scenario, ranging from small- and medium-sized enterprises to households and individuals.

Another new feature is a video on how the Budget affects Singaporeans across different stages of life.

Using stop-motion animation, the video provides glimpses into the lives of Singaporeans such as baby Hakim, who is well taken care

of due to the First Step Grant; newlyweds Jiansheng and Hui-ling, who just received the Proximity Housing Grant; and Lizzy's parents, who are retiring with fewer worries due to the Pioneer Generation Package.

This year marks the fourth time Mr Heng, who took over as finance minister in 2015, delivers the Budget statement in Parliament.

The upcoming Budget is expected to focus on Singapore's growing needs in education, healthcare, security and defence.

Said Mr Heng in a Facebook post last month: "With 2019 as Singapore's bicentennial year, Budget 2019 also provides us with the opportunity to review Singapore's progress, and to chart our collective plans to take Singapore forward."

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Database to remember Chinese pioneers

It captures stories of 200 prominent people who contributed to Singapore's development

Sue-Ann Tan

Church sacristan Robert Lim grew up hearing stories about his grandfather, stories that can now be shared with millions of other Singaporeans, thanks to modern technology.

These pioneering tales from Singapore's past have been collected in a new database to coincide with the nation's bicentenary.

That means Mr Lim, 71, will know that new generations will be able to appreciate the work people like his grandfather, Mr Lim Nee Soon, did for Singapore's development.

Mr Lim Nee Soon, who lived from 1879 to 1936, played a key role in

developing rubber plantations in Nee Soon, now known as Yishun, and was a businessman and philanthropist.

He is one of the 200 prominent Chinese men and women whose stories are captured in the interactive website known as the Singapore Biographical Database of Chinese Personalities.

The database was compiled by the National Library Board, the Singapore Federation of Chinese Clan Associations and the National University of Singapore's (NUS) Department of Chinese Studies.

It was launched yesterday at the National Library and traces people who contributed to Singapore from

the 19th century to the 21st century, including renowned figures like businessmen Eu Tong Sen and Chew Joo Chiat and war hero Lim Bo Seng.

Ms Gladys Low, senior manager of content and services for SingSEA and Exhibitions at the library, said: "Through this, we hope to inspire Singaporeans... It's about remembering where we came from."

The website features an interactive quiz with information on Chinese pioneers. The public and researchers can also share their knowledge of less well-known pioneers by filling in information gaps.

Take Mr See Hoot Kee, a Hokkien pioneer who lived from 1793 to 1847 and helped build some of the first Chinese temples in Singapore.

His descendant from about seven generations later, neurologist Raymond Seet, 43, said: "The story we often hear is about what the British

did, but Singapore is also about the undercurrent of people here who made things possible and passed down this culture.

"Our forefather was here at the time of Raffles but so much about him has been forgotten. It is urgent that we bring these things up now. The database is a baby step towards remembering."

Ms Sim Ann, Senior Minister of State for Communications and Information, and Culture, Community and Youth, told the launch: "2019 marks an opportunity to look deeply at our history and reflect on how Singapore has evolved. I hope the database will inspire more Singaporeans to connect with, learn about and deepen their appreciation of the contributions of prominent Chinese personalities to Singapore."

suetan@sph.com.sg

KEEPING A RECORD

Our forefather was here at the time of Raffles but so much about him has been forgotten. It is urgent that we bring these things up now. The database is a baby step towards remembering.



NEUROLOGIST RAYMOND SEET, 43, a descendant – about seven generations on – of Mr See Hoot Kee, a Hokkien pioneer who lived from 1793 to 1847 and helped build some of the first Chinese temples in Singapore.

Senior Minister of State Sim Ann (centre) with Mr Robert Lim, a descendant of pioneer Lim Nee Soon, as well as Ms Katherine Hoo (far right), a descendant of pioneer Whampoa Hoo Ah Kay, at the launch of the database yesterday. Also present was NUS Department of Chinese Studies head Kenneth Dean. ST PHOTO: DESMOND FOO



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President appoints new judicial commissioner

K.C. Vijayan
Senior Law Correspondent

Supreme Court registrar Vincent Hoong will become a judicial commissioner in April, the Prime Minister's Office announced yesterday.

The 61-year-old has been appointed by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister and will serve as judicial commissioner for a year after being sworn in at a ceremony at the Istana on April 10.

Current deputy registrar Teh Hwee Hwee will succeed Mr Hoong as Supreme Court registrar after being appointed by the President on the Chief Justice's recommendation.

With over 34 years of experience in both the judiciary and legal service, Mr Hoong is the most senior legal service officer, having joined the legal service in 1984. His past roles include being assistant registrar, district judge and chief executive of the Singapore Land Authority.

He was awarded the Public Administration Medal (Gold) in 2015.

Ms Teh is also the divisional registrar of the Court of Appeal, divisional registrar of the Singapore International Commercial Court and a district judge.

A National University of Singapore law graduate with a master's from Harvard, Ms Teh began her career in the Singapore Legal Service in 1992 as one of the first women appointed as assistant registrar of the Supreme Court. Her other roles include being first executive director of the Singapore Mediation Centre in 1997. She was conferred the Public Administration Medal in 2012.

Current senior assistant registrar Phang Hsiao Chung will succeed Ms Teh as deputy registrar.

Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon thanked Mr Hoong for his "invaluable contributions" as registrar.

"He has not only done an excellent job in hearing cases, he has also successfully helped steer many of the court's reforms and initiatives, such as the management of cases in the High Court and appeals in the Court of Appeal as well as improve-



Supreme Court registrar Vincent Hoong will be a judicial commissioner in April, and current deputy registrar Teh Hwee Hwee will succeed him.

ments to the practice and procedures in corporate insolvency and restructuring cases.

"I look forward to working with Vincent in his new appointment as a judicial commissioner of the Supreme Court."

He added: "While we will miss Vincent at the helm of the registry, I have every confidence that Hwee Hwee will be an outstanding replacement for him."

With Mr Hoong's appointment as judicial commissioner, the Supreme Court will have 20 judges in all, including four judges of appeal and the Chief Justice, plus seven judicial commissioners, four senior judges and 16 international judges. A judicial commissioner has the powers of a judge and is appointed for a specific period determined by the President.

vijayan@sph.com.sg

Designer who cheated home owners jailed

Shaffiq Alkhatib

An interior designer pocketed more than \$90,000 in deposits paid to his company, then, after being sacked, cheated home owners out of over \$43,000 by promising them renovation works which he did not fulfil.

Chua Min Sern, 39, was jailed for two years and three months on Thursday. He pleaded guilty last month to one count of criminal breach of trust and nine cheating charges. Nineteen other cheating charges were considered during sentencing. He committed these offences from 2017 until last year.

Chua was employed by HKlassic

Interior Design in 2014 and his job scope included collecting deposits from customers. The court heard he was sacked on Sept 21, 2017 and its director lodged a police report four days later, stating that he failed to hand over more than \$90,000 in deposits for renovation works.

Deputy Public Prosecutor Tan Weiming said that Chua later used the cash for his personal expenses and has not made any restitution to HKlassic Interior Design.

Later that month, a home owner received a text message from Chua who claimed to be working for a firm called Reno-hub Interior, asking if he was keen on some renovation works. Chua visited the man's home

on Oct 21, 2017, and went through the renovation plan. The man decided to hire him and handed over \$2,000 in cash as a deposit.

"After the payment, the accused did not start the renovation for the complainant at all and refused to refund the complainant," said DPP Tan. "In fact, the accused had no intention of commencing any renovation works right from the outset."

The home owner lodged a police report three days later.

Chua also posted advertisements on online marketplace Carousell, claiming to offer home renovation services.

Using a similar method, he cheated at least six other people who decided to engage his services. He has made no restitution to them.

For criminal breach of trust, he could have been jailed for up to 15 years and fined. For each count of cheating, he could have been jailed for up to 10 years and fined.

ashaffiq@sph.com.sg

Woman says driver tried to cheat her by not avoiding ERP gantries

Footage of a heated exchange between a Gojek driver and his passenger, who accused him of kidnapping her on their trip from Bishan to the city centre, has gone viral after it was posted on Facebook on Thursday.

Mr Kamaruzzaman Abdul Latiff, 49, shared the seven-minute clip on the Gojek Singapore Community Facebook page, saying that the female passenger was upset that he could not avoid the Electronic Road Pricing (ERP) gantries during the journey.

He said he had picked her up from Block 251 Bishan Street 22 at about 7am on Tuesday and was heading towards Coleman Street.

"How to avoid ERP?" he posted, adding that the passenger kept accusing him of trying to cheat her. Mr Kamaruzzaman said he asked her if she knew of any routes to avoid the ERP gantries but she was unable to direct him.

Speaking to The Straits Times yesterday, Mr Kamaruzzaman said the

passenger started to get upset halfway through the trip on the Central Expressway.

Gojek's fares do not include ERP charges and drivers typically enter the extra charges incurred during the journey in the app before completing the trip.

In the video, which was taken using Mr Kamaruzzaman's mobile phone, the passenger is heard saying: "It is clear that you are out to cheat (my) money."

She then makes a telephone call and an unknown person is heard over a mobile phone loudspeaker saying "you have no right to take her hostage" and "you are causing her to lose her freedom".

Mr Kamaruzzaman repeatedly says he prefers to settle any issues at a police station.

The car eventually comes to a stop in Toa Payoh Lorong 4, as Mr Kamaruzzaman speaks to a Certis Cisco officer.

At one point in the footage, the passenger screams, claiming that Mr Kamaruzzaman had locked the car door on purpose and intended to kidnap her. He then tries to explain to her that the car locks are automatic.

Mr Kamaruzzaman, who started driving with Gojek full-time in December, told ST yesterday that the

passenger later alighted and took a taxi. He added that he was not able to let her alight earlier as they were on the expressway.

"I knew that it was wrong to record a video of someone without his or her permission, but I had to do it to protect myself," he said.

He also said that he shared the video on Facebook to let other Gojek drivers know that such misunderstandings could happen.

By 11.20pm yesterday, the video had received at least 21,000 reactions and more than 44,000 shares.

Mr Kamaruzzaman, who usually drives during the day, said Gojek has told him that there was "nothing wrong" with what he did and that the company "won't do anything" to him.

A Gojek spokesman told ST that it had investigated the incident using the evidence provided and has spoken to Mr Kamaruzzaman and the passenger.

"Gojek takes all complaints from riders and drivers very seriously... A fair outcome has been reached with the driver and we are of the view that the matter is now concluded," the spokesman said.

The spokesman declined to reveal details of the "fair outcome".



Gojek takes all complaints from riders and drivers very seriously... A fair outcome has been reached with the driver and we are of the view that the matter is now concluded.

A GOJEK SPOKESMAN, on the incident.

In the video shared by Gojek driver Kamaruzzaman Abdul Latiff, the passenger is heard accusing him of locking the car door on purpose and trying to kidnap her. He then tries to explain the car locks are automatic.

PHOTO: FACEBOOK/GOJEK SINGAPORE COMMUNITY

Teen who molested student gets probation

A male student molested a 13-year-old boy from his secondary school and repeatedly pestered a 10-year-old child, asking him to send naked pictures of himself.

The offender, now 18, was sentenced to two years and three months' probation yesterday and ordered to perform 190 hours of community service.

He has to undergo psychological intervention to address sexual offending behaviours and his mother was bonded for \$5,000 to ensure his good behaviour.

The teenager pleaded guilty last December to one count each of molestation and sexual exploitation of a child. He cannot be named due to a gag order to protect his victims' identities.

Deputy Public Prosecutor Nicholas Lai told the court that the offender first met the 13-year-old boy at a school camp in January 2017 but lost contact with him.

They reconnected at a barbecue seven months later and frequently spent time together at the younger boy's home afterwards.

However, the older teen started molesting the boy later that year.

On Jan 5 last year, the victim told his senior schoolmates about his ordeal and they decided to confront the offender. The older teen was waiting for the boy at the latter's home when the group turned up.

The offender called the police hotline, claiming that he had been assaulted and managed to run away. Court documents did not state what happened following the telephone call.

Soon after, the teenager befriended the 10-year-old boy as they were in the same student care programme. On March 21 last year, he started sending the boy text messages, asking him to send naked pictures of himself.

DPP Lai told District Judge May Mesenas: "The victim replied 'no' and did not do what the accused asked of him. For the next few days, the accused continued to harass the victim by asking him to send these photos to him."

“At one point, the accused even offered the victim \$10 to have a video call with him, for the victim to show the accused his private parts. The victim continued to reject the requests of the accused.”

The boy's mother saw the text messages on March 27 and alerted her son's school. She also took her son to a neighbourhood police centre to lodge a report.

For molestation, the offender could have been jailed for up to five years and fined or caned.

ashaffiq@sph.com.sg

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9 in Sengkang caught as new PMD rules kick in

Footpath speed limit cut to 10kmh; helmet compulsory for cycling on road

Zhaki Abdullah

Nine cyclists and riders of personal mobility devices (PMD) were taken to task for offences yesterday during a morning enforcement operation conducted by the Land Transport Authority (LTA) and the Traffic Police on Sengkang East Way.

They were stopped for infringements such as having PMDs that did not satisfy LTA regulations.

These say that devices must meet certain specifications, like having a top speed of no more than 25kmh and a maximum weight of 20kg.

Four devices – including one that was nearly 8kg over the LTA weight limit – were impounded during the operation in Sengkang, the LTA said in a Facebook post.

The authority conducted a slew

of operations yesterday, which was when new regulations also came into effect.

These lower the speed limit for bicycles and PMDs on footpaths to 10kmh – down from 15kmh previously – and make it mandatory for anyone cycling on the road to use a helmet.

The Active Mobility Act, governing the use of bicycles, e-bikes and PMDs on footpaths, shared cycling paths and roads, came into effect in May last year.

The LTA noted that between that month and December, there were 2,553 offences committed under the Act.

“We have been conducting regular enforcement operations, and will continue to do so against errant active mobility users, to keep our paths safe for all users,” said LTA.

Giving an update on the registration of e-scooters, which began on Jan 2, the authority said 25,397 devices had been registered as of Thursday.

In March last year, the Government accepted the Active Mobility Advisory Panel’s proposal to make e-scooter registration mandatory as part of efforts to clamp down on reckless riding.

This followed the requirement for e-bikes to be registered, which has seen more than 13,000 of the two-wheelers registered so far.

Those who register their devices by the end of June this year have 14 days to attach both a number plate as well as an LTA-issued registration mark, or face a fine of up to \$1,000, or up to three months in jail, or both.

From July, those found riding un-



Personal mobility devices must meet certain specifications, such as having a top speed of no more than 25kmh and a maximum weight of 20kg, under the Active Mobility Act. ST FILE PHOTO

25,397

Number of e-scooters registered with the Land Transport Authority.

13,000

Number of e-bikes registered.

registered e-scooters on public paths face fines of up to \$2,000 or up to three months’ jail, or both, for a first offence.

“E-scooter owners who have not yet registered their devices can do so via LTA’s website or at any SingPost Post Office by March 31, 2019 to enjoy a waiver of the \$20 registration fee,” said the LTA.

azhaki@sph.com.sg

Helping the needy usher in Chinese New Year



Mr Ben Tan (left), country chief executive officer of Courts Singapore speaking with Mr Ng Ah Ngow, 77, during a home visit on Thursday. With them are Ms Jaena Teo, acting head for the CareElderly programme from Care Community Services Society (CCSS), Mr Dewin Lee (right), executive director of the CCSS, and a Courts volunteer.

Staff volunteers from Courts are helping to spring-clean the homes of some elderly folk, and delivering brand-new home necessities to them to help them usher in the Chinese New Year. This is part of the launch of Courts Charity Home, the company’s corporate social responsibility programme in which products are donated to people in need.

On Thursday, 12 employees from Courts volunteered to clean the homes of 22 underprivileged elderly living alone in two-room rental flats in the MacPherson neighbourhood who are beneficiaries of CCSS.

The volunteers also matched the wish list of the elderly residents they visited with household items such as electric kettles, rice cookers and television sets.

The seniors were then treated to a Chinese New Year buffet dinner at CCSS’ Senior Activity Centre in Circuit Road, and took part in a host of activities including singing songs and playing bingo, along with Courts and CCSS staff.

The launch of Courts Charity Home kicked off a year-long partnership between Courts and CCSS, where Courts will donate furnishings and electrical appliances to beneficiaries under CCSS during key festive celebrations.

CCSS is a registered charity affiliated with the National Council of Social Service that serves more than 1,300 beneficiaries, including vulnerable seniors, at-risk youth and disadvantaged children. ST PHOTO: KUA CHEE SIONG

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Innovation courses to gear up lawyers for future economy

Cara Wong

Lawyers and legal professionals need to think like tech entrepreneurs and use the skill to find new solutions to problems they encounter in their practice.

To help them get started on this, the Future law Innovation Programme (Flip) and the Singapore Management University Academy will launch two modules on design thinking and entrepreneurial ideation this month. In entrepreneurial ideation, lawyers learn to look for business opportunities and creatively generate new ideas.

These four-week courses will provide the foundation for lawyers here to kick-start their own innovation, said Mr Paul Neo, executive director of Singapore Academy of Law Ventures, which runs Flip.

“Not all lawyers are business management trained, and we have to teach them the basis of business strategy in order for them to think of innovation,” said Mr Neo, who spoke to the media on Thursday during Flip’s first anniversary.

The modules, which are open to working legal professionals with classes thrice a week, are just one out of a string of initiatives that Flip will launch this year in a bid to bring about more innovation and change to the legal sector.

Flip is a two-year pilot programme launched in January last year by Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon to prepare the legal sector for technology disruption.

The programme brings together

lawyers, technopreneurs, investors, academics, and regulators, to help develop the model for the delivery of legal services in the future economy.

Apart from the new modules, Flip will also launch its own start-up accelerator to groom and mentor promising start-ups in the legal technology sector. Unlike generic accelerator programmes, the Flip bespoke accelerator programme would suit the specific needs of the legal tech start-ups, said Mr Neo.

“Some have taken part in generic accelerators, but the investors don’t understand the solutions they’re trying to sell or market, because it’s quite specific,” said Mr Neo. “And coming from the legal sector, we believe law tech is quite a unique area.”

Mr Jerrold Soh, a Singapore Management University lecturer and legal tech start-up founder said the accelerator is a particularly promising new initiative. He is involved in another new Flip initiative to produce an annual report on legal innovation in the region.

The former law and economics student noted that the Flip accelerator could help legal tech entrepreneurs get business leads easier, and network with like-minded people working on similar issues and problems.

“Hopefully this could help to shorten the trial and error experimentation stage that accompanies every start up in its early days,” said Mr Soh.

cara.wong@sph.com.sg

Foreign vehicles with outstanding fines may be denied entry from April 1

From April 1, foreign vehicles with outstanding fines for traffic, parking or vehicular emissions offences could be denied entry to Singapore, as part of efforts to strengthen enforcement against these offences.

This was announced yesterday by five government agencies: the Housing Board, Land Transport Authority, National Environment Agency, Singapore Police Force and Urban Redevelopment Authority.

Foreign motorists who enter Singapore must abide by Singapore’s laws and settle any outstanding fines for offences, the agencies said, noting they took a “serious view” of those who did not. To date, motorists of foreign vehicles have accumulated about 400,000 outstanding fines amounting to \$32 million.

In the statement, the agencies noted that at Singapore’s two land checkpoints, fliers and billboards are used to remind foreign motorists to settle their outstanding fines.

The Traffic Police and other agencies have also been conducting operations at these checkpoints.

However, some continue to disregard their outstanding fines, the statement said.

It added that to deter such behaviour and get errant motorists to settle their fines, “foreign vehicles with a number of outstanding fines for vehicle-related offences may be denied entry into Singapore from April 1, 2019”.

The agencies encouraged foreign motorists to check if they have any outstanding fines for vehicle-related offences – which can be done on the AXS website – and settle them promptly. Fines can be settled via the AXS website, kiosks and mobile app, and at post offices and via the respective agencies’ websites.

Across the Causeway, Malaysian police have also taken action against foreign motorists with outstanding fines. In 2017, Johor police said they were going after Singapore motorists, who were responsible for more than 140,000 unpaid summonses.

Zhaki Abdullah

Section of Market Street to become a park

Stretch to close permanently on Feb 17 to facilitate work

Derek Wong

A section of Market Street will become a 1,000 sq m public park, with work beginning on Feb 17.

With the section to be permanently closed from that date, motorists driving along Church Street and heading to Chulia Street should use D'Almeida Street, after the Cecil Street junction, the Land Transport Authority said yesterday.

The move is part of efforts by the Government in collaboration with developer CapitaLand to make the Central Business District greener and more pedestrian-friendly. The new park is being built in tandem with the adjacent CapitaSpring, a 51-storey office tower at 88 Market Street, where the Golden Shoe Car Park used to be.

The site also previously housed the popular Market Street Food Centre. The stallholders will be at the second and third levels of the new building's podium when it is completed. They are now at an interim food centre in Cross Street. The park will be connected to places such as the Singapore River, Boat Quay, Esplanade Park and the Telok Ayer conservation area.

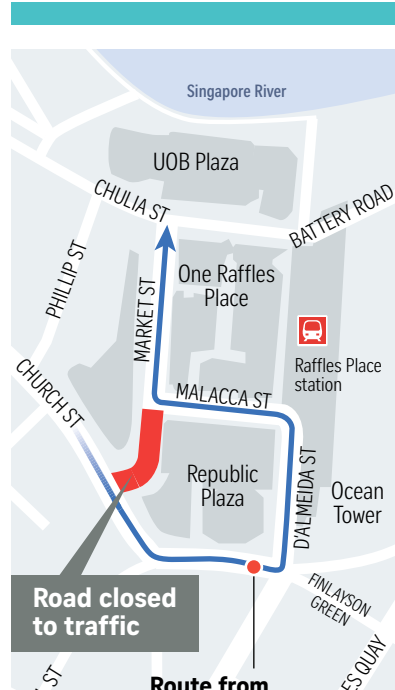
As part of the redevelopment, an area that includes Market, Malacca and Phillip streets will get widened footpaths, added greenery and new paths that will be part of the Central Area cycling network.

There will also be sheltered linkways between developments in the area.

CapitaSpring will be one of the tallest and greenest buildings in Raffles Place once completed in 2021. It will feature the Green Oasis, a four-storey-high botanical promenade between the Grade A office floors and a modern serviced residence, as well as Singapore's highest urban farm and a fine-dining restaurant on its 280m-high rooftop.

One of CapitaSpring's anchor tenants will be US investment banking giant JP Morgan.

wderek@sph.com.sg



Source: URA STRAITS TIMES GRAPHICS

Man jailed, fined \$34m in record contraband cigarette case

Shaffiq Alkhatib

A recalcitrant offender was sentenced yesterday to four years' jail and a fine of \$34 million for dealing in the largest amount of contraband cigarettes in Singapore to date.

Singaporean Ng Ghim Hong, 32, who dealt in more than 2,700kg of duty-unpaid cigarettes, will have to spend an additional two years and four months behind bars if he is unable to pay the fine.

The court heard that he was convicted of a similar offence in 2009 for dealing in more than 1,000kg of contraband tobacco products. He was sentenced to 1½ years' jail. In November last year, he pleaded guilty to one count of dealing in uncustomed goods with the intent to defraud the Government of the excise duty.

It all started in 2014 when one of his accomplices, Malaysian Mohd Nor Alif Ramlan, 28, got to know a man known only as "Ah Yang". Ah Yang, also a Malaysian, then offered him a job to unload bags of cotton cloth into a warehouse in Sungei Kadut. Alif was later told to liaise with Ng for the job.

Deputy public prosecutors Thiam Jia Min and Tan Weiming stated in court documents: "In the course of this unloading operation, Alif detected squarish and hard items inside the gunny bags and realised that they were duty-unpaid cigarettes. Despite knowing they were duty-unpaid cigarettes, Alif continued working for Ah Yang as he was in need of money."

In 2016, Ng then took Alif to the warehouse in Tuas and told the Malaysian to unload duty-unpaid cigarettes there. The court heard that Customs officers conducted an operation on Feb 22, 2017, to trail a container transported by a prime mover as it was suspected of containing contraband cigarettes. They followed it from PSA Tanjong Pagar Gate 1, and it arrived at the Tuas South Avenue 10 warehouse around 10.15am that day.

At around 6.40pm, officers spotted Alif and five other Malaysians removing pallets from the container and arrested the group. They also spotted Ng's black car in the vicinity and he was later arrested.

Alif was sentenced to three years' jail in March 2017 for his role in the crime.

ashaffiq@sph.com.sg



About 40 photos are on display at Bugis and Orchard MRT stations in the Show The Full Picture exhibition. Taken by 13 professional and amateur photographers, they offer a behind-the-scenes glimpse into the work that goes into constructing the upcoming Thomson-East Coast Line. ST PHOTOS: SAHIBA CHAUDHARY

Giving 'The Full Picture' of work on upcoming MRT line

Toh Ting Wei

Commuters can now take a closer look at the tunnelling work that takes place 28m underground, how train cars are joined together and the tasks that construction workers carry out.

Such scenes and more are depicted in photos on display at Bugis and Orchard MRT stations.

The Land Transport Authority (LTA) and Canon Singapore collaborated on the exhibition, titled Show The Full Picture, of about 40 photos on construction works for the upcoming Thomson-East Coast Line.

Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Transport Baey Yam Keng, who was at the launch of the exhibition yesterday in Bugis, said: "I think this exhibition really gives the public a glimpse into the work behind the scenes – the long hours, the kind of challenging environment and the danger."

"This is also a tribute to our engineers and workers for their hard work."

The photos can be viewed at Bugis and Orchard until Feb 27 and March



Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Transport Baey Yam Keng (centre) chatting with photographer Isaac Benjamin Ong (right), whose work is featured in the Show The Full Picture exhibition. They were joined at yesterday's launch by LTA deputy chief executive for infrastructure and development Chua Chong Kheng.

31 respectively. They will also be displayed at Bedok, Tampines, Dhoby Ghaut, Bedok Reservoir, Paya Lebar, Bencoolen and Woodlands stations before the end of May.

The exhibition is a follow-up to the Those Who Move Us exhibition in 2015, which showcased work done to maintain Singa-

pore's public transport system.

For the current exhibition, 13 professional and amateur photographers captured the images during a series of five photo clinics held at Katong Park, Mayflower, Orchard and Woodlands stations, and Mandai Depot on the Thomson-East Coast Line.

One of the photographers, Mr

Mohd Yusof Noor, 43, who works as a senior tech executive, said his respect for the workers greatly increased after documenting them at the Katong Park site. "The kind of environment they work in, working in a tight space... It's very physical – not everybody can do it," he said.

Mr Baey, an MP for Tampines GRC, also told The Straits Times on the sidelines of yesterday's event that an appeal has been filed with the Housing Board to keep an unusual koi fish tank in Tampines Street 41 that had made the news.

An HDB flat owner had converted the doorstep of his property into a fish tank for his koi collection but was asked last month to remove the structure due to safety concerns that it "could potentially lead to injuries or fatalities".

These concerns include the risk of the glass tank shattering or children climbing into the tank.

Mr Baey said the town council had worked with the resident to try to address HDB's concerns, and that a decision on the issue is expected after Chinese New Year.

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Home: 6319-5397
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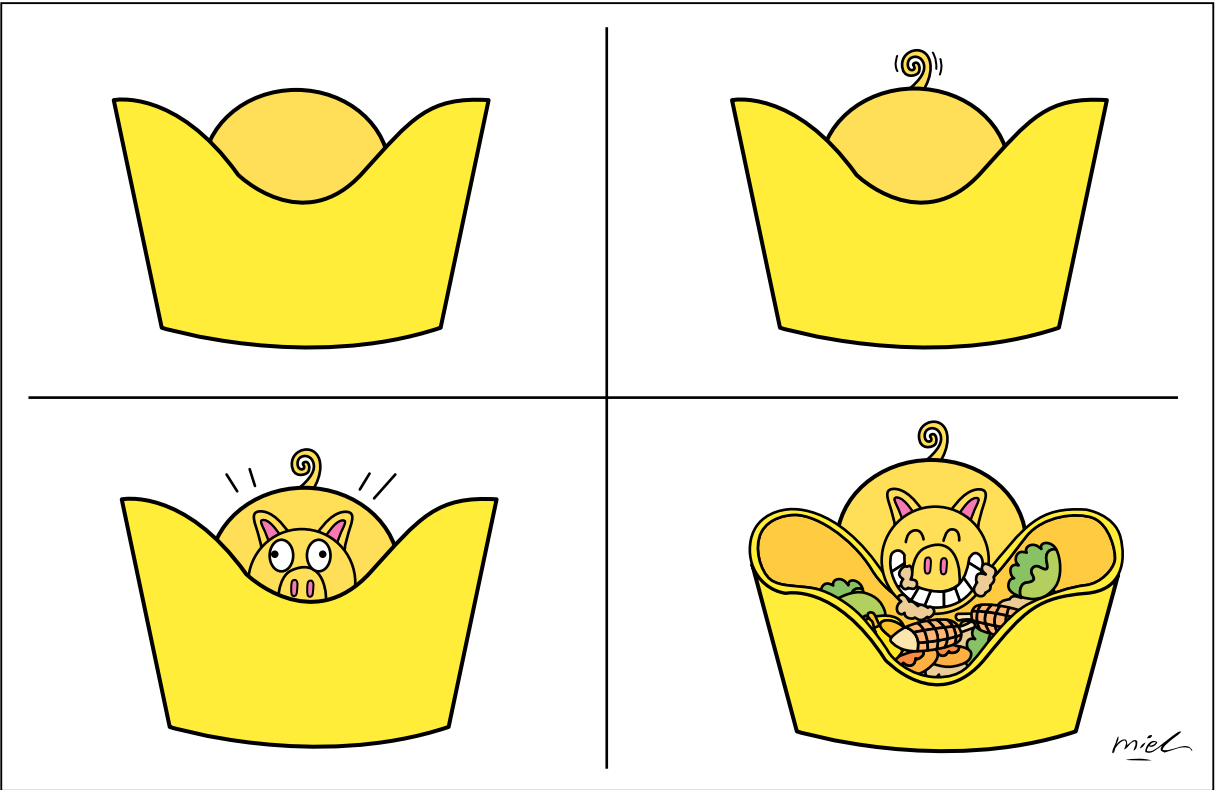
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Art: 6319-5591
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FORUM

mieL's TAKE

Year of the Pig



Why is FAS lamenting constraints that haven't changed in ages?

According to the Football Association of Singapore (FAS), a small population, land constraints, juggling commitments to national service and priorities in academia are what the local football ecosystem has to work around to develop the sport in Singapore (What Fandi meant by 'ecosystem'; Jan 28).

Despite this unique ecosystem of ours comprising these challenges, Singapore won the Asean Football Federation Championship in 2004, 2007 and 2012, and the under-23 team won the bronze medal at the SEA Games in 2007, 2009 and 2013. The ecosystem then was not any different from now. It is just as

important for the national team to have the support from all stakeholders now as it was then. If something is amiss in this area, FAS should take steps to garner support as they are the controlling body, rather than simply lamenting the lack of it. It would be more fruitful if coach Fandi Ahmad himself could explain the constraints of the ecosystem he faced during the training and management of the team. **George Pasqual**

WRITE IN: Letters should be meant for exclusive publication in The Straits Times. They should be no longer than 400 words and must include the writer's full name, address and phone numbers. The Forum editor reserves the right to edit the letters. Please e-mail your letter to stforum@sph.com.sg.

Transforming tomorrow together today

Singapore is at a crossroads and our future can be brighter if we embrace change together (Dark clouds loom but S'pore is never helpless: Tharman; Jan 27). Current events around the world indicate that we are living in the best of times and the worst of times; where great opportunities and high risks abound. Now, more than ever in history, we have the means to live longer and richer, but not the meaning to live happier. We are on the brink of a new era of abundance powered by digital technology, but live in an obsolete world system that encourages a scarcity mindset

with zero-sum thinking. This has and will exacerbate the growing divide between the haves and have-nots in developed societies, including Singapore. While the quick fix to tackle the divide is to raise taxes and redistribute wealth, a more sustainable approach is to nurture an inclusive culture where everyone can give and care for each other. The process to develop the new desired habit takes regular frequency and considerable time, but it can be achieved by designing giving as a journey to help people start giving in multiple ways and at different stages of their life.

Taking the journey approach enables individuals to grow and be transformed along the way as they experience the impact and joy of their giving. A new age of social networking has also begun and it is up to us to harness technology and develop collaborative human-centred solutions that unleash the forces of partnership and innovation. To succeed in the new era, we must adopt a whole-systems mentality to build a future society where we can thrive together. We must transform tomorrow together today. **Andy Sim Ngee Ho**

FORUM ONLINE

1. LETTERS OF THE WEEK: Go online to see this week's top three picks.

2. BEYOND SOCIAL SERVICES: Social workers need to work with neighbours, too.

ST MORE LETTERS ON
www.straitstimes.com
Join readers in sharing heartwarming stories at www.facebook.com/groups/whatsgd/

Everyone needs to contribute to S'pore story

As a small nation, we must never allow ourselves to be polarised and divided because we need our collective strengths and other resources to succeed in the "fourth wave" of industrial revolution. Our greatest challenge is not out there but within and among us (PM Lee: Join hands to write a greater Singapore Story; Jan 29). As a people, we must have the self-efficacy to believe we can battle all odds, as well as the discipline, determination, tenacity and resilience to turn our dreams into reality. We must build on our "gotong royong" spirit by pioneering more bottom-up and peer-to-peer initiatives. Foster more helping hands,

including non-governmental organisations and volunteers, to strengthen the bonds between families and communities. Help to look after the last, the least, the lonely and the lost. Develop a home where we will have a deeper sense of belonging. Continue to believe that in our little red dot, we can find purpose for living, and fulfilment on individual, family and community levels. Encourage more partnerships between the public, private and people sectors, and galvanise their key stakeholders to connect, collaborate and co-create solutions for our communities and society. To create the brightest future, we cannot and should not just rely on the Government to lead the way. The crucial tasks ahead to strengthen our social ecosystem and make Singapore a liveable and lovable home have to be carried out by each and every Singaporean. **Patrick Liew Siow Gian (Dr)**

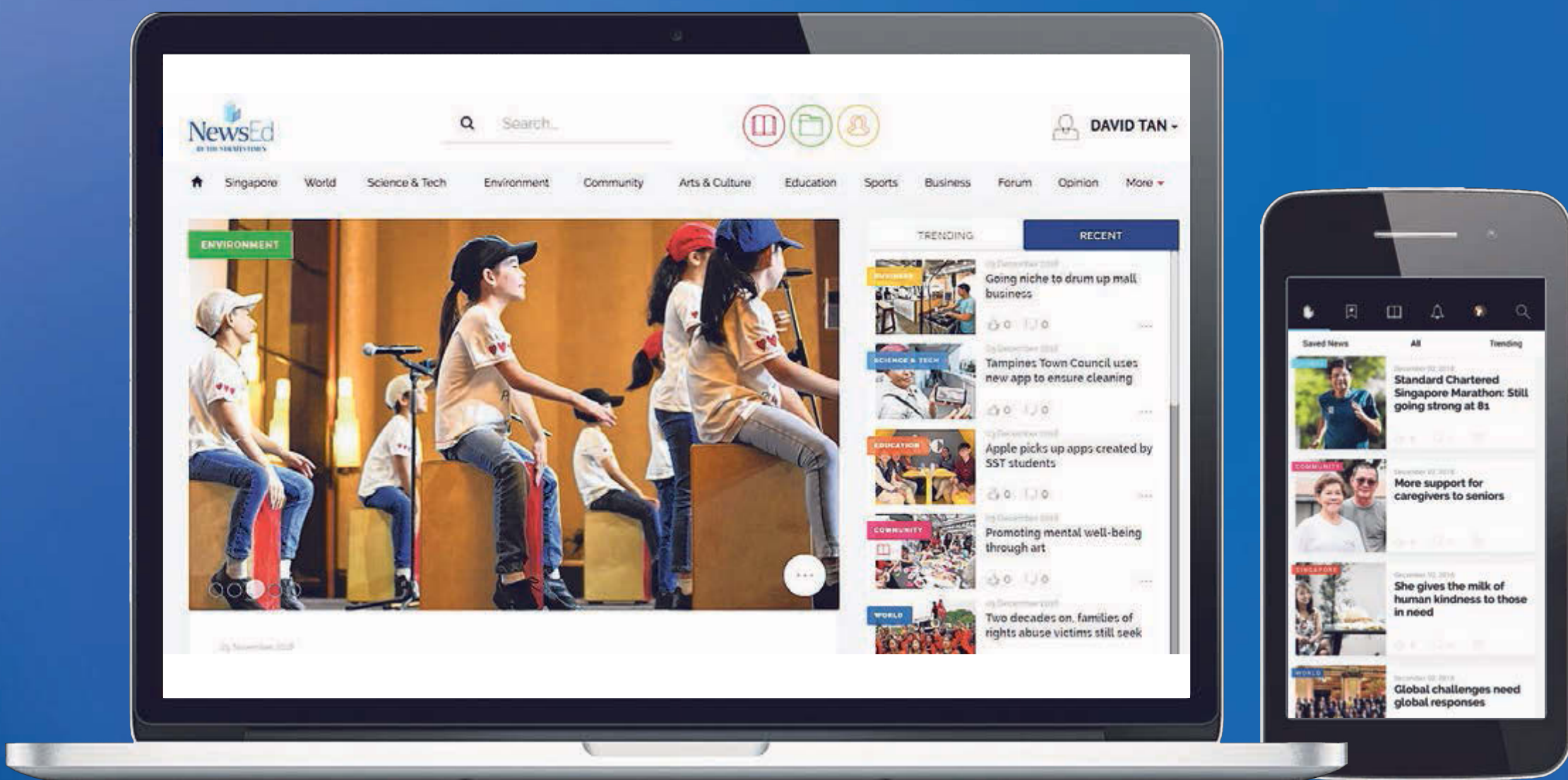
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BUSINESS

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Cross Island Line gives condo projects lift

Some located near proposed stations on future MRT line see boost in sales

Grace Leong
Business Correspondent

The upcoming first phase of the Cross Island Line – Singapore's longest fully underground MRT line – seems to be proving a bonanza for some condominium projects near proposed stations.

Affinity at Serangoon and The Garden Residences, which were both launched about a month before the cooling measures were introduced on July 5 last year, have seen a spike in buying interest since details of the new line were announced last week.

The projects in Serangoon North had been recording moderate take-up rates following the cooling measures due to their proximity to each other, competition from new launches in the area and a lack of MRT connectivity at the time.

But within seven days of last week's announcement, Affinity at Serangoon has sold around 45 units at an average price of \$1,475 per sq ft, including around 30 over the weekend, said Mr Eugene Lim, director of sales and marketing for Oxley Holdings, which is leading the consortium for the 1,052-unit project.

He told The Straits Times that about 360 of the 650 units launched so far have been sold.

"We normally do about five to eight units over a weekend. The MRT story is a very strong factor," Mr Lim added.

"There was no station nearby previously, but we will now be a five-minute walk from the Serangoon North MRT. Developments near the MRT can achieve high rental yield."

The so-called MRT effect tends to be more pronounced in the suburbs, where accessibility to stations is a big plus, especially if these areas are farther away from the city centre, said Ms Alice Tan, director of residential project marketing at Knight Frank Singapore.

Once a new line is announced, there will usually be a short-term



boost to sales and in some instances, price increases, in nearby projects.

"Investors can usually expect greater price growth when the station is near completion," she added.

"In previous announcements for the Downtown and Circle lines, the positive spillover impact was more broad-based, influencing resales and new home sales, and the sales in-

crease was more gradual over a few quarters to a year."

The 613-unit Garden Residences, also near the future Serangoon North MRT, has seen in-

creased interest since last week's announcement, said a spokesman from Gardens Development, a joint venture between Keppel Land and Wing Tai Holdings.

650

Units launched, 360 sold

An artist's impression of Affinity at Serangoon. Within seven days of last week's announcement on the Cross Island Line, it sold around 45 units.
PHOTO: OXLEY

The so-called MRT effect tends to be more pronounced in the suburbs, where accessibility to stations is a big plus, especially if these areas are farther away from the city centre, said Ms Alice Tan, director of residential project marketing at Knight Frank Singapore.

Almost half of 156 units launched were sold as at the end of December, the spokesman added.

The first phase of the Cross Island Line will be completed by 2029 and span 12 stations from Changi to Sin Ming. Phase 1 will have four interchanges.

Bright Hill, a station on the Thomson-East Coast Line, will expand to become an interchange station. The others will be Hougang with the North East Line, Ang Mo Kio with the North-South Line and at Pasir Ris with the East-West Line.

The 1,472-unit Riverfront Residences in Hougang, whose launch was brought forward to July 5 in a last-minute bid to beat the cooling measures, will likely be a beneficiary given its proximity to Hougang MRT.

"Developments near Hougang MRT station will benefit... This will impact The Florence Residences and Riverfront Residences," ERA Realty key executive officer Eugene Lim said.

The 1,410-unit Florence Residences, the former Florence Regency, plans to tout this as a selling point at its preview on Feb 16 and launch on March 2.

"We will be near the upcoming Hougang Interchange, which is good for investors and those commuting between Jurong and Changi. In addition, we are already near Kovan MRT," said Mr Chng Chee Beow, executive director of Logan Property (Singapore).

gleong@sph.com.sg

156

Launched, more than half sold as at end Dec

The 613-unit Garden Residences, which is also near the future Serangoon North MRT station, has seen increased interest since last week's announcement.
LIANHE ZAOBAO FILE PHOTO

NTUC secretary-general Ng Chee Meng (centre) and assistant secretary-general Patrick Tay (in black jacket) before the start of the Future Jobs, Skills and Training Forum yesterday.
ST PHOTO: KELVIN CHNG



NTUC hopes for SkillsFuture Credit top-up in Budget 2019

Joanna Seow
Manpower Correspondent

In its Budget wish list, the labour movement is calling on the Government to provide an additional \$500 in SkillsFuture Credit to help workers upgrade their skills.

It is also hoping for a three-year extension for the Special Employment Credit scheme (SEC), which expires this December, and two years for the Career Support Programme. The salary support schemes boost the employment prospects of older workers and professionals, managers, executives and technicians (PMETs).

Speaking on the sidelines of the Future Jobs, Skills and Training Forum yesterday, National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) assistant secretary-general Patrick Tay said some workers have used up all \$500 of their SkillsFuture Credit, but want to learn a second skill.

The credit is given to all Singaporeans aged 25 and above from January 2016. A top-up now is timely, he added, because the half-life of skills is five years.

"Because of rapid changes and transformation, you can't just have one skill... (to) keep you going for the rest of your life. You probably have to reskill quite often," he said.

In a speech at the same event at

One Marina Boulevard, labour chief Ng Chee Meng said NTUC will focus this year on helping workers secure better wages, welfare and work prospects.

One area it is looking at is a review of the retirement and re-employment ages.

"We are in the advanced stages working with the Government to review the retirement age, the re-employment age, and strengthen the re-employment guidelines and adequacies for mature workers," he said.

NTUC, he said, will also look at extending the progressive wage model to more sectors and lower-wage professionals, managers and

executives, as well as advocate for enhanced protection for the labour rights of workers and freelancers.

Through the NTUC Training Council, workers will get help to benefit from the industry transformation maps, said Mr Ng, who is NTUC's secretary-general.

Addressing about 500 people, including union leaders and company management, he said workers must transform to prepare for change, and for Singapore to leverage opportunities.

As part of these transformation efforts, Mr Ng said the tripartite model must go beyond the traditional collaboration between the unions, Government and employers, and adopt a "systems thinking" approach, where they look at sectors as ecosystems and try to solve problems upstream.

Citing an example, he said this approach led to the setting up of the Singapore Bus Academy in 2016 to address the lack of skilled Singaporean bus captains.

Mr Ng said the global economy is expected to be slower this year, but Singapore remains in a good position because of its strong brand, geographical location in Asean and high-quality workforce.

"We have strong institutions, a strong investment environment and a strong innovation index – very good positive foundations that we can build on for the next lap of our development," he said.

The Special Employment Credit scheme subsidises the wages of Singaporean workers aged at least 55 who earn up to \$4,000 a month. The scheme was extended once in 2017 and ends in December.

The Career Support Programme subsidises the wages of mid-career or long-term unemployed people hired for PMET jobs and is due to end next month.

joseow@sph.com.sg

Budget to help in tackling global uncertainties: Indranee

The Budget will aim to help the economy navigate global uncertainties by boosting innovation, promoting internationalisation and improving worker skills.

The guidance came yesterday from Ms Indranee Rajah, Minister in the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister for Finance and Education.

Ms Indranee told radio station Money FM 89.3 that there are considerable challenges ahead, from global trade tensions to the slowing Chinese economy and the disruptive potential of technology.

She also cited warnings from the International Monetary Fund and World Bank of "darker skies ahead". "Budget 2019 is a continuation of our strategy to chart a steady course through this kind of economic uncertainty," she added.

Help for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is on the cards. She said: "The best assistance is really to help SMEs to be productive, to help them to see how to best scale up, how to partner with bigger entities to access opportunities."

The Budget announcement on Feb 18 will focus "quite a bit" on these areas, as well as moves to further encourage SMEs to band together – although such organisation is most naturally carried out by trade associations and chambers, Ms Indranee said.

The disruption caused by techno-

logical change can be tackled. "The key is helping people to be able to come to grips with it," she added.

On the SkillsFuture scheme, Ms Indranee said: "That will continue but we'll look at ways in which you can help people further."

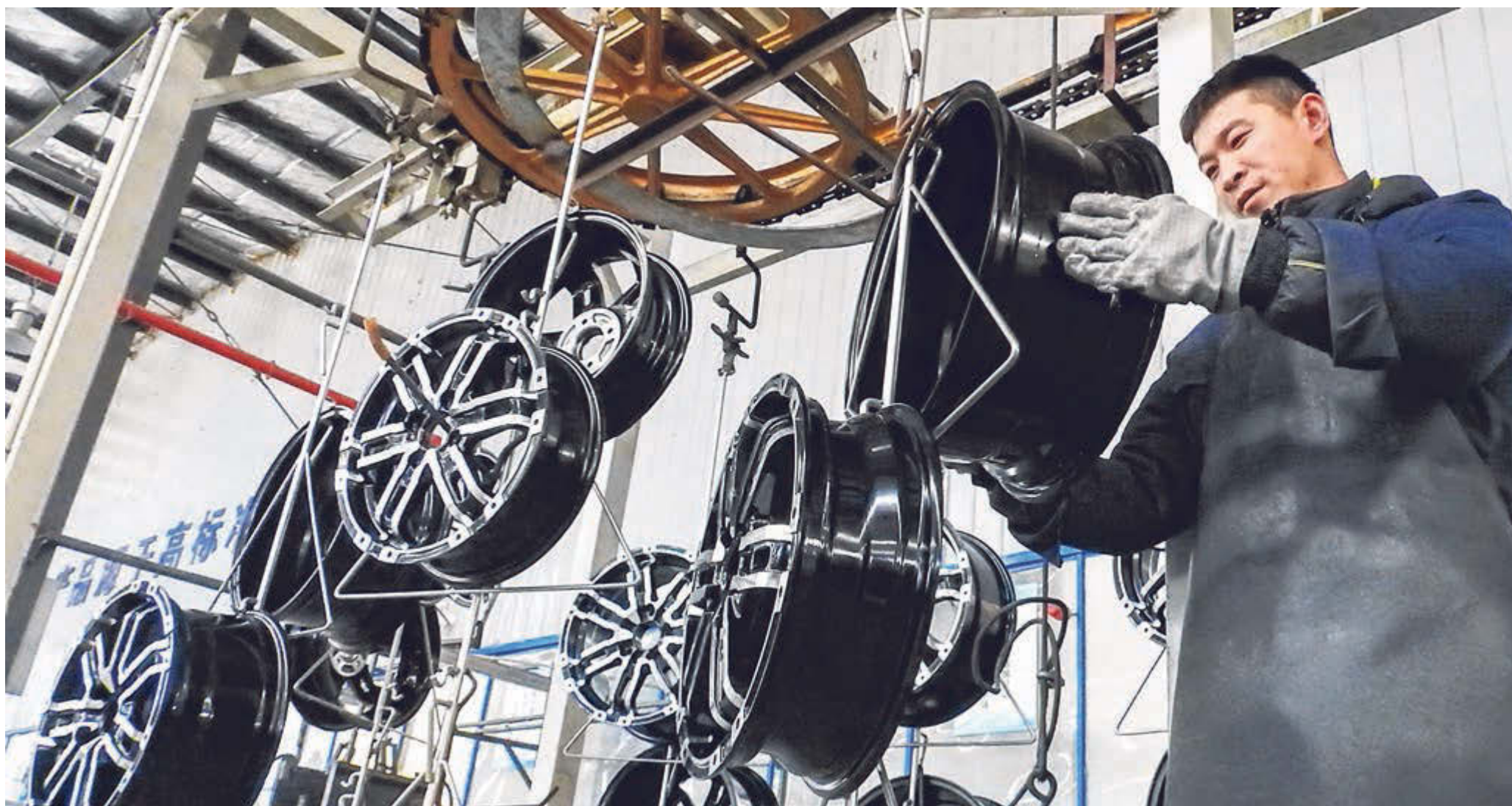
Economic issues aside, the Budget will have a social focus on education and healthcare in particular, as Finance Minister Heng Swee Keat earlier mentioned, as well as measures to encourage volunteering.

Ms Indranee added that there will be a "special focus on the underprivileged".

She also addressed the perennial question of how to fund spending, noting that Singapore "cannot over-rely" on investment returns on the nation's reserves as the investment climate varies.

The upcoming hike in goods and services tax from 7 per cent to 9 per cent, due between 2021 and 2025, comes within this context and in view of the long-term needs of healthcare and an ageing population. The exact timing of the hike, however, will depend on the economic situation and circumstances in the next term of government, she added.

Ms Indranee also noted that the Government is "still working on" the e-commerce tax due in 2020 but would not be drawn into revealing more details. "Watch this space, but nothing to add on that particular topic for now," she said.



A worker checks wheels at a factory in Lianyungang in China's Jiangsu province. China's manufacturing activity contracted last month, official data showed. PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

The numbers were weaker than Thursday's official PMI survey.

Taiwan posted its weakest readings since September 2015, South Korea the joint-lowest since November 2016 and Indonesia, the first contraction in a year.

Japan's factory activity was the slowest in 29 months, with weakening exports and output suggesting it could soon fall into contraction. Manufacturers in the world's No.3 economy face both falling exports and a likely slump in domestic demand when the country's sales tax is hiked in October.

Freight rates for dry-bulk and container ships, carriers of most of the world's raw materials and finished goods, have plunged over the last six months.

The Baltic Dry Index, a measure of ship transport costs for materials like iron ore and coal, has fallen by 47 per cent since mid-2018, when the main tariffs were imposed.

The International Monetary Fund last week cut its world growth forecasts for this year and next, and said failure to resolve protectionism could further destabilise the slowing global economy.

Those concerns were reinforced on Monday by sales warnings from Caterpillar and Nvidia Corp, coming on the heels of similar alarms raised by Apple Inc, FedEx Corp and a host of chipmakers.

China watchers typically advise taking data early in the year with a pinch of salt, suspecting the trends may be distorted by the timing of the Chinese New Year holidays.

Many firms scale back operations or close for long periods around the holidays, which begin on Monday this year. However, workers, business owners and labour activists have told Reuters that companies are shutting earlier than usual as the trade war bites, with some likely to close for good.

So far, China has fast-tracked infrastructure projects, cut taxes and pumped liquidity into the financial system to help keep cash-starved firms afloat. It has also been guiding down borrowing costs. REUTERS

Factory activity eases across Asia as China economy cools

Weakest readings in years for several countries; talk of potential rate cuts in some

HONG KONG • Factory activity shrank across much of Asia last month, falling to the weakest in years in several countries and adding to worries that trade tariffs and cooling demand in China pose an increasing threat to global growth.

The weak Purchasing Managers Index (PMI) readings reinforce expectations that central banks in Asia will put any further interest rate hikes on hold this year.

In some countries, such as China, Australia and India, there is even

talk of potential rate cuts.

Trade-focused Asia appears to be suffering the most visible loss of momentum so far, but the euro zone economy is stuck in low gear and many emerging markets are sputtering.

The United States economy, while a bit wobbly of late, still looks set to post solid growth, though softer than last year's pace.

That puts pressure on Beijing to

come up with more stimulus measures at its upcoming parliamentary meeting next month and find common ground with the US to prevent their trade war from escalating, with a truce expiring next month.

"The slowing down of the manufacturing sector in Asia continues," said Ms Irene Cheung, Asia strategist at ANZ. "A lot depends on whether the US and China come to a reasonable deal. Then we can actu-

ally avert this potential trade recession. But at the moment, it's all tentative," she added.

US President Donald Trump said on Thursday he will meet with Chinese President Xi Jinping soon to try to seal a comprehensive trade deal as he and his top trade negotiator both cited substantial progress in two days of high-level talks.

Mr Trump, speaking at the White House during a meeting with Chinese Vice-Premier Liu He, said he was optimistic that the world's two largest economies could reach "the biggest deal ever made".

Meanwhile, bleak factory gauges suggest that the global economy will get worse before it gets better.

China's factory activity shrank by the most in almost three years last month as new orders slumped further and output fell, the private Caixin/Markit PMI survey showed yesterday.

Big Four call for HK tax-regime review to raise competitiveness

Claire Huang
Hong Kong Correspondent

Amid worries that Hong Kong's competitiveness is fading, the Big Four accounting firms are urging the government to review the city's tax regime comprehensively to make it easier and cheaper to do business.

Ahead of Financial Secretary Paul Chan's annual budget speech on Feb 27, the Big Four – Deloitte, EY, KPMG and PwC – have separately called on the government to continue to diversify the economy and invest in innovation and technology as new drivers of growth.

PwC Hong Kong's tax partner Jeremy Choi suggested the government "conduct a comprehensive review of the existing tax system so it keeps pace with Hong Kong's economic progress and outlook". An example is to make the proposed unified tax exemption for privately offered funds more attractive by ex-

tending it to institutional asset owners such as pension funds and endowment funds, he said.

A common thread among the proposals is a focus on attracting international firms to set up their regional headquarters in Hong Kong.

Deloitte suggested a concessionary tax rate of 8.25 per cent for eligible international corporations that set up regional headquarters in Hong Kong.

EY said that in the past decade, the four pillar industries – financial services, trading and logistics, tourism and professional services – have contributed close to half of Hong Kong's gross domestic product (GDP) and employment.

It said the six new industries – cultural and creative, education, medical services, environmental, innovation and technology as well as testing and certification services – contribute only around 10 per cent of Hong Kong's GDP and employment.

"Diversifying our economy will provide our younger generation with greater and better career choices," EY said.

One way to do so is to attract the best in technology and creative enterprises to work in the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park by giving them preferential tax treatments, on top of rent perks, said Ms Agnes Chan, managing partner for EY Hong Kong and Macau.

These could be in the form of a concessionary profits tax rate of 8.25 per cent, which is half of the normal rate of 16.5 per cent for qualifying enterprises, or preferential salaries tax treatment for stock rewards and stock option gains, she added.

Mr Stanley Ho, a tax principal at KPMG China, said tax incentives will enable firms to leverage the Greater Bay Area opportunities.

The bay area plan aims to link nine Guangdong cities, Hong Kong

PwC Hong Kong's tax partner Jeremy Choi suggested the government "conduct a comprehensive review of the existing tax system so it keeps pace with Hong Kong's economic progress and outlook". An example is to make the proposed unified tax exemption for privately offered funds more attractive by extending it to institutional asset owners such as pension funds and endowment funds, he said.

and Macau into a giant science and tech hub comparable to the combined size of San Francisco and Tokyo's bay areas by 2035.

"Extending the current super tax deduction to Hong Kong taxpayers outsourcing their research and development activities to sub-contractors in the bay area will allow companies to leverage the talent pool and available technologies in the region," said Mr Ho.

Calls to boost Hong Kong's competitiveness come as some fear that it is falling short in this area.

In the 2018 World Economic Forum ranking on global competitiveness, Hong Kong scored high in entrepreneurship but fell short in innovation, so it slid to seventh place from the sixth spot.

On the other hand, Singapore took the second spot last year, up from third place the year before.

The Big Four said the city is projected to record a surplus of between HK\$40 billion and HK\$56.4

billion (\$\$6.9 billion and \$\$9.8 billion) for 2018/2019, roughly in line with the government's original estimate of HK\$46.6 billion. But this is a far cry from the bumper surplus of HK\$138 billion a year ago.

The estimated smaller surplus for 2018/2019 is likely a result of lower revenues from land sales, profit tax and stamp duty.

The audit firms projected reserves to come in at HK\$1.1 trillion to HK\$1.2 trillion, which is over 40 per cent of the city's GDP or about 26 months of the government's total expenditure.

Mr Tommy Wu, senior economist at Oxford Economics said he expects Mr Chan's budget speech to focus on issues including hospital and medical spending, old age homes, homes for people with disabilities, refinement on the tax concessions for electric vehicles and housing.

huangji@sph.com.sg

Iswaran urges businesses – big or small – to go digital

Aw Cheng Wei

Going digital is an endeavour that all businesses must undertake, no matter how big or small they are, Communications and Information Minister S. Iswaran said yesterday.

The question for businesses today is no longer one of whether they should go digital, but "when and how", he added.

"It's not just about the tech industries, it's not just about manufacturing. It's also about our heritage districts... and also our heartland areas because all these sectors have to (go digital)."

"Digitalisation has a way of democratising the economy, making every business... go well beyond its physical scale to reach distant markets and tap diverse resources," he said.

Mr Iswaran was speaking at the signing of a memorandum of intent that aims to digitise shops in Little India. Signatories include the Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Info-communications Media Development Authority (IMDA), Enterprise Singapore and the Little India Shopkeepers and Heritage Association.

An IMDA survey of 114 merchants in Little India last year found that 60 per cent had installed digital payment options for customers. About 45 per cent said they were open to adopting technology.

As part of the digitisation push, mobile rewards platform Fave will start a loyalty rewards programme for shoppers in Little India from next month, among other promotions.

Shoppers will earn a digital stamp when they spend a minimum of \$10



(From left) Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SICCI) vice-chairmen Praseon Mukherjee and Mahesh Sivaswamy; SICCI director Muralikrishnan Rangan; Minister for Communications & Information S. Iswaran; SICCI chairman T. Chandroo; SICCI chief executive Kumaran Barathan; and Little India Shopkeepers and Heritage Association chairman Rajakumar Chandra at a Business Transformation Through Digitalisation event yesterday. ST PHOTO: KUA CHEE SIONG

at a merchant in Little India. Rewards can be claimed at shops in the neighbourhood.

Merchants who use the Scash app can turn their phones into point-of-sales terminals allowing customers to make digital payments.

They can also start online shops on the app by taking photos of the items they want to sell and sharing them through social networking platforms instead of setting up a website.

A spokesman for Gayatri Indian

restaurant on Race Course Road said the rate of returning customers has increased since it started offering cashless payment options through FavePay.

"With the cashback benefit (which rewards customers with a

DEMOCRATISING THE ECONOMY

It's not just about the tech industries, it's not just about manufacturing. It's also about our heritage districts... and also our heartland areas because all these sectors have to (go digital). Digitalisation has a way of democratising the economy, making every business... go well beyond its physical scale to reach distant markets and tap diverse resources.



MRS. ISWARAN, COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION MINISTER, on the need to go digital notwithstanding company size.

awcw@sph.com.sg

The Canary Wharf financial district in London. Sources familiar with the US banks said the number of relocations could rise in if there was a hardening of positions between now and the end of this month and banks concluded the differences were irreconcilable. PHOTO: REUTERS



US banks moving some London staff ahead of Brexit deadline

Workers being transferred to EU include traders and sales staff, say industry sources

NEW YORK • With two months until Brexit takes effect, US banks have begun transferring some London staff to continental Europe and drawing up contingency plans in case of a “hard” Brexit.

Around 400 Bank of America employees are set to transfer to Paris and Frankfurt from this month, according to a person familiar with the matter.

About half of this group – or 200 people – will be in place before the March 29 Brexit deadline, with the remainder following soon after.

JPMorgan, the biggest US bank by assets, plans to move “several hundred” jobs from London to the Continent and had already transferred a handful of employees at the end of last year. It has informed other British staff of relocations, said a source close to the situation.

The person did not specify where in Europe the employees went. JPMorgan has offices in Frankfurt, Paris, Milan, Dublin and Luxembourg.

Goldman Sachs has beefed up its staffing in both Frankfurt and Paris so that it can react “seamlessly” to clients from March 29, according to a person close to the situation.

Citigroup, which is present in 20 of the 27 EU countries, at the end of last year transferred 63 London-based employees to the Continent, including 45 traders, said a person familiar with the bank’s plans.

Prior to Brexit, US banks had shown a preference to situate many

functions in London that could do business with the entire EU bloc of countries.

But in cleaving London from the EU, Brexit is expected to restrict the EU work of British staff.

“We’ll be ready for our European clients on day one,” said a spokesman for JPMorgan Chase.

The group of workers being transferred from London includes traders and sales staff and banks have also been hiring new employees on the Continent, sources said.

That banks are sticking with plans to expand in Paris is a sign financial giants have not been too unnerved by the so-called “yellow vest” protests that have gained international notoriety following clashes with French police.

The yellow vest protest “does not change our plans,” JPMorgan Chase chief executive Jamie Dimon said earlier this month in a conference call with journalists. “The real issue is whether there will be a hard Brexit or not.”

Some banks have made arrangements to allow staff to commute to London over an interim period because of family commitments before the transfer is permanent.

Until now, transfers of banking professionals have been limited because the finance sector hopes that Britain and Brussels can agree on a two-year period of transition.

But sources familiar with the banks said the number of relocations could rise in if there was a hardening of positions between



Prior to Brexit, US banks had shown a preference to situate many functions in London that could do business with the entire EU bloc of countries. But in cleaving London from the EU, Brexit is expected to restrict the EU work of British staff.

The House of Commons is set to vote on British Prime Minister Theresa May’s Plan B for Brexit on Feb 13. PHOTO: EPA-EFE

now and the end of this month and banks concluded the differences were irreconcilable.

“We still don’t believe it will be (a hard Brexit) because it will be very difficult for both Britain and the EU, so we expect a transitional withdrawal agreement,” said JPMorgan’s Dimon.

But as March 29 draws closer, many experts are growing more concerned about a worst-case scenario feared by Brussels, London and beyond.

The risk of a Brexit without an agreement “has increased,” warned European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker.

Large US banks have prepared for such a worst-case scenario to ensure that the banking system remains functional, sources said.

Federal Reserve chair Jerome Powell, who called Brexit an “un-

precedented event”, said this week the US central bank had been working with US financial institutions that operate in Britain and the EU.

“We’ve been monitoring the Brexit situation very carefully for a long time,” Mr Powell said.

“We have worked with those institutions alongside UK and EU regulators to assure ourselves that those firms have plans and... all the things they will need to deal with the full range of Brexit outcomes.” AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

US adds 304,000 jobs in January amid govt shutdown

WASHINGTON • US job creation saw another blockbuster month in January, blowing past the government shutdown, but that disruption helped to push the unemployment rate higher, the Labour Department reported yesterday.

The construction, healthcare, hospitality and retail sectors added tens of thousands workers, another sign that the robust labour market remains a fundamental source of strength even though the United States economy is expected to slow this year.

The new numbers were also fresh welcome news for President Donald Trump, whose already-low public approval rating suffered in the wake of the longest government shutdown in US history.

Employers added 304,000 net new positions last month – the high-

est in nearly a year and almost double what economists had predicted – while growth in worker pay held steady just above inflation, according to the report.

However, the five-week government shutdown was at least partly responsible for an uptick in the jobless rate to 4.0 per cent, the highest in seven months. And hiring in December was revised sharply downwards to a still-strong 222,000, but far lower than the 312,000 positions initially reported.

While the partial shutdown of the federal government between December and January idled 800,000 government workers, the Labour Department still counted furloughed employees – who would receive back pay – as employed, leaving the monthly job creation numbers unaffected.

But the shutdown was also a driver of the rise in the unemployment rate, since the separate survey of households used to determine the joblessness counted furloughed workers as well as contractors as unemployed.

Meanwhile, the increase in unemployment also was the result of more workers coming off the sidelines to join the job hunt.

That increased the size of the labour force, driving the closely watched labour-force participation rate up to 63.2 per cent, its highest level in more than five years.

The shutdown also drove about half a million people into part-time work, swelling this group to 5.1 million, its highest level in 16 months.

Hourly pay grew a token 0.1 per cent over December but was up 3.2 per cent over January of last year, well above consumer inflation of 1.9 per cent in the same period, leaving American workers with greater purchasing power.

Employment in leisure and hospitality grew by 74,000 jobs for the month, with restaurants and bars adding 32,000, while construction added 52,000 workers and hospitals and ambulatory care centres together added about 41,000 net new positions. AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Schroders to acquire Thirdrock wealth business

Schroders Wealth Management will acquire the wealth management business of Singapore-based independent asset manager Thirdrock Group for an undisclosed sum.

Thirdrock, which was founded in 2010, had client assets under management of about \$3 billion as at Dec 31.

The deal, announced yesterday, is expected to be completed in the second quarter. It will involve merging Thirdrock’s wealth management arm with Schroders’ Singapore business and operating under the Schroders brand.

Schroders said Thirdrock’s employees from the unit, including client advisers and portfolio managers with “proven investment expertise” as well as the existing management team, will move to the Schroders Wealth Management office in Singapore.

Thirdrock’s chief executive and founder Jason Lai will take over the leadership of Schroders Wealth Management in Asia and spearhead the drive to grow the business across the region.

Co-founder Melvyn Yeo will become deputy head of wealth management Asia.

Mr Peter Hall, Schroders’ global head of wealth management, said: “We have the opportunity to create a unique business model in Asia, combining the institutional investment expertise, leading brand and extensive network of Schroders with the entrepreneurialism, open architecture and personal service of an independent asset manager.”

He said the deal, combined with its recently announced partnership with Maybank Asset Management, highlights Schroders’ ambition to build a “leading wealth management business in the region”.

Mr Lai added that being part of a “well-resourced global investment and wealth management business” provides Thirdrock with access to greater investment expertise and enhances its proposition for clients.

Thirdrock, which was founded in 2010, had client assets under management of about \$3 billion as at Dec 31.

SSB

Singapore Savings Bonds

[Website: www.sgs.gov.sg/savingsbonds/](http://www.sgs.gov.sg/savingsbonds/)

Hotline: 6221 3682

Application for Singapore Savings Bonds

The Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) invites individuals to apply for the next issue of Singapore Savings Bonds (Savings Bonds):

Issuance date ¹	01 March 2019
Maturity date ¹	01 March 2029
Maximum amount offered ²	\$300,000,000
Issue Code	GX19030Z
Coupon payment dates ¹	01 September and 01 March
Minimum application	\$500
Individual limit across all issues	\$200,000

You may apply for this issue from **6.00pm, 1 February 2019 till 9.00pm, 25 February 2019**. You may apply via DBS/POSB, OCBC and UOB ATMs (cash applications only) and Internet Banking (cash or Supplementary Retirement Scheme (SRS) applications), and OCBC’s mobile application (cash or SRS applications). These channels will be open between 7.00am and 9.00pm from Mondays to Saturdays, excluding Public Holidays.

Interest Payment Schedule										
Year*	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th
Coupon, %	1.95	1.95	1.97	2.05	2.13	2.20	2.30	2.39	2.48	2.55
Average annual return, %**	1.95	1.95	1.96	1.98	2.01	2.04	2.07	2.11	2.15	2.18

*From issue date **At the end of each year, on a compounded basis

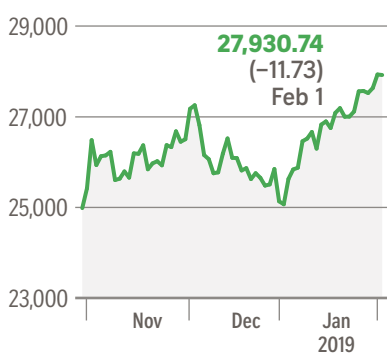
This bond will be reflected as “**SBMAR19 GX19030Z**” in your CDP statement or “**GX19030Z**” in your SRS statement. Interest and principal payments will be paid to the bank account linked to CDP (for cash investments) or SRS account (for SRS investments). Interest income on Savings Bonds is exempt from tax, and Savings Bonds may not be sold, transferred or pledged without MAS’ prior approval. Holders of existing Savings Bonds may submit redemption requests by 9.00pm, **25 February 2019**. The bonds will be redeemed on **01 March 2019**¹.

This document is for informational purposes only and does not constitute the terms of issue for this Savings Bond. By subscribing to this Savings Bond, you shall be deemed to have understood, accepted, and be bound by, the terms of issue for the Savings Bonds on the date of issuance of the Savings Bond to you. For the complete terms of issue, please refer to the public notice dated 1 February 2019 at the following link: <http://www.sgs.gov.sg/savingsbonds/Resources/Announcements.aspx>.

¹If MAS’ electronic payment system is not in operation on this date, then issuance, interest payment or redemption, as the case may be, will occur on the next day when the electronic payment system is in operation.

²If total applications exceed this amount, MAS will distribute the total amount on offer as evenly as possible, and some individuals may not receive the full amount they applied for.

Hang Seng



Shanghai Comp



Nikkei 225



Dow Jones



BullsAndBears

Muted sentiment keeps traders on sidelines

Subdued mood across Asia with little to cheer and weak China factory data

Lynette Tan

Local investors found nothing much to inspire them yesterday with Chinese manufacturing data disappointing while United States-China trade talks seem to drag on.

With such a downbeat mood, it was no surprise the Straits Times Index dipped 0.05 per cent or 1.49 points to 3,188.68. Losers outweighed gainers 201 to 171 on trade of 1.21 billion shares worth \$954.13 million. The benchmark lost 0.42 per cent for the week.

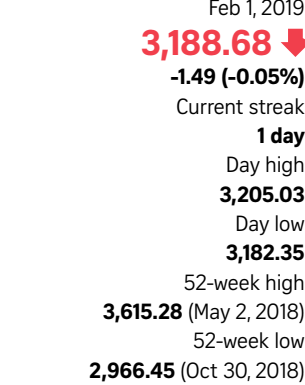
The mood was muted across most of Asia as well. A private survey on China's manufacturing sector yesterday showed that factory activity contracted last month, which some analysts said underscored the importance of striking a trade deal.

Both Washington and Beijing said the talks yielded progress but did not give details.

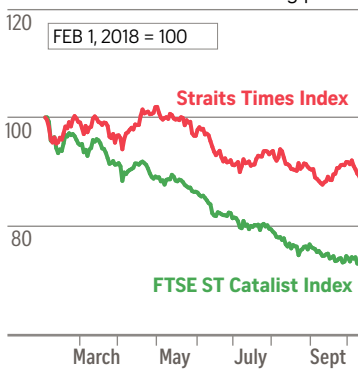
"The talks did not result in any negative headlines. Expectations for a sweeping deal were low to begin with and the market is probably relieved that trade tensions are no longer escalating," said DBS Group Research in a client note.

Hongkong Land contributed to the losses here, closing down 4.74 per cent at US\$6.83 while Venture Corp pared 2.34 per cent to \$515.88. Financial stocks also felt some

Straits Times Index



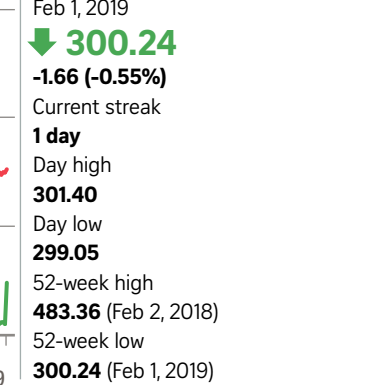
FTSE ST Catalyst Index



FTSE ST All-Share Index



FTSE ST Catalyst Index



pain, with OCBC declining 0.52 per cent to \$11.45.

Overall, six out of the 12 sectors finished in the red, including manufacturing and properties.

Manufacturing firms have become more downbeat about prospects in the next six months, ac-

cording to an Economic Development Board survey.

Electronics and precision engineering firms were the most gloomy. Both clusters expect weaker orders amid softening demand for semiconductors and related equipment, and growing com-

cerns over trade tensions. Indeed, some manufacturing-linked stocks came under pressure yesterday. Hi-P International gave up 0.54 per cent to 92 cents, Delong lost 0.17 per cent to \$5.84 and AEM Holdings cut 1.03 per cent to 96.5 cents.

With January wrapped up and some markets heading off for Chinese New Year festivities, the question is, what's next?

Besides ongoing trade worries, Phillip Securities research head Paul Chew expects stock markets to be driven by corporate earnings. "By February, most of the results will be out, so that might give a little bit of direction," he said.

But British bank IG analyst Pan Jingyi says the trade conflict is the biggest issue: "With the countdown to the March 1 deadline the case for US-China talks, this could perhaps be the greatest driver for market sentiment as we move forth."

tanlyn@sph.com.sg

Straits Times Index stocks

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	COMPANY	CURRENCY LAST TRADED SALE	+OR-	'VOL '000	GROSS YIELD%	P/BV
278	245	Ascendas Reit	273	-1	9962	5.9	1.3
192	161	CapitaCom Trust	187xd	-1	13391	4.7	1
380	298	Capitaland	335	+2	6871	3.6	0.7
242	195	CapitalMall Trust	236	-4	7762	4.9	1.2
1359	780	CityDev	905	-14	5283	2	0.8
251	196	ComfortDelGro	239	+6	9275	4.4	2
3128	2265	DBS Grp	2407	+15	2744	5.9	1.4
994	767	DairyFarm USD	US905	+2	494	2.3	-
136	85.5	Genting Sing	110	unch	23955	3.2	1.7
38.5	22.5	Golden Agri-Res	25.5	unch	9195	3.2	0.6
40.5	23	HPH Trust USD	US25.5	+0.5	16781	10.3	0.4
744	588	HongkongLand USD	US683	-34	4260	2.9	0.3
6974	1099	JMH USD	US6669	-13	295	2.4	0.7
4080	3155	JSH USD	US3833	+5	168	0.8	0.4
4012	2766	Jardine C&C	3751	-26	131	3.1	1.8
882	567	Keppel Corp	604 cd	-6	3244	5	1
1404	1036	OCBC Bank	1145	-6	3427	3.2	1.2
564	455	SATS	482	-2	1143	3.7	3.3
826	672	SGX	759xd	-5	2046	4	9.5
1184	914	SIA	963	-2	1036	4.2	0.8
292	231	SPH	248	-3	2303	5.2	1.1
375	319	ST Engineering	374	+2	3466	4	5.5
360	243	Sembcorp Ind	258	-1	2509	5.3	0.9
358	283	Singtel	302	unch	13484	6.8	1.7
92.5	57.5	Thomson Medical	7.8	unch	34069	0.8	3.7
3037	2380	UOB	2534	+15	1274	3.9	1.2
910	591	UOL	664	unch	1449	2.6	0.6
2965	1320	Venture Corp	1588	-38	1424	3.8	2
335	297	Wilmar Intl	334	+1	2513	3	1
162	84	YZJ Shipbldg SGD	142	+2	12844	3.2	1

FTSE ST Large & Mid-Cap Index stocks

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	COMPANY	CURRENCY LAST TRADED SALE	+OR-	'VOL '000	GROSS YIELD%	P/BV
278	245	Ascendas Reit	273	-1	9962	5.9	1.3
123	105	Ascott Reit	120 cd	+1	4052	6	1
75	59	Bumitama Agri	68	-1	765	1.1	16
178	143	CDL HTrust	167 cd	unch	1764	-	1.1
192	161	CapitaCom Trust	187xd	-1	13391	4.7	1
380	298	Capitaland	335	+2	6871	3.6	0.7
242	195	CapitalMall Trust	236	-4	7762	4.9	1.2
1359	780	CityDev	905	-14	5283	2	0.8
251	196	ComfortDelGro	239	+6	9275	4.4	2
3128	2265	DBS Grp	2407	+15	2744	5.9	1.4
994	767	DairyFarm USD	US905	+2	494	2.3	-
78	59	Far East HTrust	65.5	-1	3054	-	0.8
190	150	First Resources	171	unch	947	4	2.2
231	211	Fraser's Cpt Tr	226	-3	915	5.3	108.7
115	101	Fraser's L&I Tr	111	+3	19134	6.2	1.2
136	85.5	Genting Sing	110	unch	23955	3.2	1.7
38.5	22.5	Golden Agri-Res	25.5	unch	9195	3.2	0.6
226	167	GuocoLand Ltd	181	-2	256	3.9	0.6
40.5	23	HPH Trust USD	US25.5	+0.5	16781	10.3	0.4
744	588	HongkongLand USD	US683	-34	4260	2.9	0.3
6974	1099	JMH USD	US6669	-13	295	2.4	0.7
4080	3155	JSH USD	US3833	+5	168	0.8	0.4
4012	2766	Jardine C&C	3751	-26	131	3.1	1.8
58	44.5	Keppel Infra Tr	51	unch	3517	7.3	1.9
882	567	Keppel Corp	604 cd	-6	3244	5	1
127	108	Keppel Reit	118	unch	12041	4.7	0.8
215	151	Man Oriental USD	105 cd	unch	360	5.5	3.6
273	170	Mapletree Com Tr	174	-2	11080	5.2	1.2
180	152	Mapletree Log Tr	201	+1	1989	5.8	1.4
208	184	Mapletree NAC Tr	137	unch	11297	5.6	1.2
140	118	Mapletree NAC Tr	123xd	-5	11690	6.1	0.9
73	73	NetLink NBN Tr	78	-0.5	1926	-	1
1404	1036	OCBC Bank	1145	-6	3427	3.2	1.2
215	136	OUE	152	-1	356	2	0.3
91.5	64.5	OUE HTTrust	74 cd	+0.5	2483	-	1
250	157	Olam Intl	184	-1	208	4.1	0.9
59	28	Oxley	30	unch	1148	5	0.9
300	256	ParkwayLife Reit	285 cd	-2	727	4.5	1.5
121	98	Raffles Medical	111	unch	539	2	2.6
564	455	SATS	482	-2	1143	3.7	3.3
826	672	SGX	759xd	-5	2046	4	9.5
1184	914	SIA	963	-2	1036	4.2	0.8
337	220	SIA Engineering	250	+2	35	5.2	1.9
292	231	SPH	248	-3	2303	5.2	1.1
103	98	SPHREIT	102	-1	1383	5.4	1.1
375	319	ST Engineering	374	+2	3466	4	5.5
360	243	Sembcorp Ind	258	-1	2509	5.3	0.9
281	149	Sembcorp Marine	159	-1	7217	1.3	1.4
58	39	Silverlake Axis	48.5	unch	4687	6.2	7
147	88.5	SingPost	96.5 cd	-2	3396	3.6	1.3
358	283	Singtel	302	unch	13484	6.8	1.7
290	158	StarHub	182	+4	1636	8.8	5.6
76	63.5	StarhillGbl Reit	72 cd	+0.5	1899	6.3	0.8
205	163	Suntec Reit	190	-3	15136	5.3	0.9
92.5	57.5	Thomson Medical	7.8	unch	34069	0.8	3.7
10.2	3.7	Thomson Medical	7.8	unch	29824	-	2.8
3037	2380	UOB	2534	+15	1274	3.9	1.2
910	591	UOL	664	unch	1449	2.6	0.6
2965	1320	Venture Corp	1588	-38	1424	3.8	2
335	297	Wilmar Intl	334	+1	2513	3	1
241	183	Wing Tai	203	-2	204	3.9	0.5
162	84	YZJ Shipbldg SGD	142	+2	12844	3.2	1
186	116	Yanlord Land	128	+1	1878	5.3	0.5

FTSE ST Small-Cap Index stocks

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	COMPANY	LAST SALE	+OR-	'VOL '000	GROSS YIELD%	P/BV
145	129	AIMSAMP Cap Reit	139 cd	+1	304	7.4	1
70	48	Accordia Golf Tr	55	unch	275	7	0.6
89.5	74	Ascendas-hTrust	83.5	-15	945	-	0.9
119	99	Ascendas-iTrust	111	+3	3354	5.5	1.3
58	12.2	Asian Pay TV Tr	13	-0.1	1823	50	0.2
64	48	Banyan Tree	59	unch	97	17	0.8
281	115	Best World	270	+3	776	15	9.7
85.5	76	Boustead	79.5	+0.5	76	3.8	1.2
126	79.5	BreadTalk	87.5	-0.5	35	8	2.3
652	521	Bukit Sembawang	556	-5	30	3.2	1.1
88	65.5	Cache Log Trust	71xd	-2	3837	8.3	1.1
52.5	39.5	Centurion	40.5	unch	400	6.2	0.7
166	104	China Aviation	117	+1	359	3.8	1
47.5	29.5	China Everbright	37	+0.5	556	1.3	0.7
165	90.5	China Sunshine	129	-1	286	2.3	1.4
104	64	Chip Eng Seng	70.5	unch	1114	5.7	0.6
53.5	31.5	Cosco	35.5	-1	3097	-	1.5
700	302	Delong	584	-1	16	-	0.6
27.5	17.5	Duty Free Intl	20.5 cd	unch	3	9	1.3
78.5	67.5	EC World Reit	72.5	unch	175	8.3	0.8
59	47	ESR-REIT	51.5	-1	3168	7.5	1.1
141	92	First Reit	110	+1	1790	7.8	1.1
150	134	Fraser's Com Tr	149	unch	3391	6.4	1
81.5	66.5	Fraser's HTrust	74	+0.5	1645	-	1
26.5	16.4	Geo Energy Res	19.9	unch	189	5	12
91	70.5	HRnetGroup	77.5	-0.5	177	3	2.4
67.5	52	Health Mgt Intl	54	-0.5	98	0.6	5.2
279	73	Hi-P Intl	92	-0.5	1663	27.2	1.4
283	252	Hong Leong Fin	265	+3	110	49	0.6
81.5	71	IREIT Global	75	+0.5	57	7.9	1
40.5	18.3	Indofood Agri	22	unch	541	-	0.3
84	43	Japfa	82	-1	3174	0.6	1.5
79	49	KSH	51.5	-0.5	40	4.3	0.9
86.9	53	Kep-KBS Reit USD	66xd	-0.5	946	9.4	0.6
149	128	Keppel DC Reit	144	unch	4939	5.1	1.3
189	132	Keppel T&T	188	unch	175	-	1.2
119	7	KrisEnergy	85	-0.1	12229	-	1
77.5	44.5	Lian Beng	49	unch	344	4.6	0.4
42.5	18	Lippo Malls Tr	24.5	+0.5	7027	14	0.9
53	30	MM2 Asia	31.5	-1	447	-	1.8
98.5	69.5	ManulifeReit USD	84.5	-0.5	969	6.5	0.8
120	95	Metro	99.5	+0.5	49	5	0.6
25	5	Noble	81	susp	-	-	-
66.4	45	OUE Com Reit	51.5 cd	+1.5	4927	6.8	0.7
66.5	54	PEC	57.5	-	-	3.5	0.6
46	17	POSH	19	+0.3	1	-	0.6
64.5	44.5	Q&M Dental	50	unch	27	3.2	3.6
113	55.5	OAF Ltd	70	unch	56	7.1	0.8
124	96	Riverstone	114	+2	24	2	3.7
55	22	SIIC Environment	33	+1	352	-	0.6
45	38	Sabana Reit	41xd	-0.5	199	7.8	0.7
119	90	Sheng Siong	112	+1	1509	2.9	6.2
25.5	3.3	Sino Grandness	5.9	-0.6	9835	-	0.1
69	56	SoilbuildBizReit	60.5	unch	1698	8.7	1
129	80.5	Tianjin ZX USD	87	+1.5	272	-	0.7
48	32.5	Tuan Sing	39.5 cd	unch	590	2.3	0.4
136	54	UMS	63	-1	1179	7.9	1.5
112	58.5	Valuetronics	70	-0.5	884	6.5	160.3
15.9	8.3	Ying Li Intl	11.9	-0.1	2724	-	0.1
50	24	Yoma Strategic	33	-1	2334	0.8	0.5
35	16.1	Yongnam	17.7	unch	100	-	0.3

No Signboard’s loss widens to \$573,643 in Q1

Group reports restated net loss of \$416,366 for previous year

Seafood restaurant operator No Signboard Holdings sank further under water in the first quarter, it reported yesterday.

The Catalyst-listed firm recorded a net loss of \$573,643 for the three months to Dec 31 from a restated loss of \$416,366 a year earlier.

This comes after numbers from the previous year were significantly restated after the company adopted the latest accounting rules.

Under the new accounting framework, the group reported a restated net loss of \$416,366 for the first quarter ended Dec 31, 2017, a marked difference from the \$1.4 million net profit it had initially reported under the old accounting rules.

Revenue in the latest quarter fell 16.1 per cent to \$5.6 million, as a result of loss of turnover from the month-long closure of an outlet for repair works and a decline in average spending per restaurant customer.

The termination of non-performing sales contracts of customers in the entertainment establishments as part of the beer business restructuring exercise had an effect as well.

Loss per share stood at 0.12 cent for the quarter, compared with 0.09 cent a year ago.

No dividend was declared. The firm told the Singapore Exchange (SGX) yesterday that it ex-

pects to open two more outlets under the Hawker brand and planned to open one under Mom’s Touch brand, for which it has secured an exclusive master franchise agreement in Singapore and Malaysia.

No Signboard said it continues to develop new brands and work on overseas expansion plans.

“With the completion of the beer business restructuring exercise, the beer business will work on expanding the distribution channels for the beer in accordance with the new sales strategy,” it said.

No Signboard halted trading in its shares after Thursday’s morning session, when the stock surged nearly 24 per cent, prompting a query from the SGX. It also requested a trading halt at 12.30pm on Thursday pending an announcement.

The company has not yet responded to the SGX queries.



Post and parcel revenue rose 9 per cent to \$213.2 million, thanks to increased domestic and international deliveries over the e-commerce peak season. SingPost’s e-commerce segment also saw higher volumes, driven by festive shopping in the US. ST PHOTO: DESMOND WEE

SingPost Q3 profit climbs nearly 16% on one-off gain

An exceptional \$28.2 million gain from the dilution of interest in a Chinese associate boosted Singapore Post’s (SingPost) results in the third quarter. Net profit rose 15.6 per cent to \$50.2 million for the three months to Dec 31.

The lift stemmed from China-based logistics firm 4PX ceasing to be an associated company after SingPost’s shareholding was diluted by the issuance of additional 4PX shares to an existing shareholder.

Profit on operating activities declined 8.5 per cent to \$42.2 million as higher contributions from post and parcel, logistics and property businesses were largely offset by continued losses in the United States, said SingPost.

Earnings per share stood at 2.06 cents for the quarter, up from 1.75 cents a year earlier.

An interim dividend of 0.5 cent a share has been declared. It will be paid out on Feb 28.

The firm expects its post and parcel business to continue benefiting from the growth in global e-commerce and its property business to remain stable but domestic letter mail volumes are expected to trend moderately down.

Revenue grew 7.6 per cent to \$441.4 million on the back of higher peak season volumes.

Notably, post and parcel revenue rose 9 per cent to \$213.2 million, thanks to increased domestic and international deliveries over the e-commerce peak season.

SingPost’s e-commerce segment

also saw higher volumes, driven by festive shopping in the US, with turnover rising 8.7 per cent to \$82.5 million.

The firm expects its post and parcel business to continue benefiting from the growth in global e-commerce and its property business to remain stable but domestic letter mail volumes are expected to trend moderately down.

Nonetheless, it continues to face challenges in the US e-commerce market due to greater competition and rising customer bankruptcies.

“The US businesses are underperforming, and are expected to remain loss-making in the current financial year,” SingPost said. “In view of this, there is a risk of impairment to the carrying value of the US businesses.

“Impairments, if any, will be assessed based on the full financial year results and future plans for the businesses.”

Interbank currency rates

Currencies	Against \$		Against US\$	
	Bid	Offer	Bid	Offer
\$S/US\$ to one unit of foreign currency:				
Australian dollar	0.9781	0.9789	0.7264	0.7269
Canadian dollar	1.0257	1.0259	0.7618	0.7617
Euro	1.5412	1.5417	1.1446	1.1448
NZ dollar	0.9312	0.9319	0.6916	0.6920
Sterling pound	1.7653	1.7657	1.3110	1.3111
US dollar	1.3465	1.3467		
\$S/US\$ to 100 units of foreign currency:				
Chinese renminbi	20.0796	20.1126	14.9125	14.9347
Danish kroner	20.6496	20.6536	15.3358	15.3365
Hong Kong dollar	17.16	17.17	12.7468	12.7478
Indian Rupee	190	190	140.90	140.94
Indonesian rupiah	0.0096	0.0096	0.0072	0.0072
Japanese yen	123.70	123.73	0.9187	0.9188
Korean won	0.1210	0.1211	0.0899	0.0899
Malaysian ringgit	32.86	32.89	24.4021	24.4260
New Taiwan dollar	4.3784	4.3834	3.2517	3.2549
Norwegian krone	15.9655	15.9690	11.8571	11.8579
Philippine peso	25.830	25.858	1.9183	1.9201
Saudi riyal	35.8961	35.9101	26.6588	26.6652
Swedish krona	14.8901	14.8973	11.0584	11.0621
Swiss franc	135.4491	135.5238	100.5935	100.6340
Thai Baht	4.3005	4.3039	3.1939	3.1959

Source: OCBC

Government securities

GOVERNMENT BONDS							Feb 1
Period	Issue code	Coupon rate (%)	Maturity	Close Bid	High	Day's Low	
2-Year	NY05100N	3.250%	01-Sep-20	101.96	101.97	101.96	
5-Year	NS19100A	2.000%	01-Feb-24	100.00	100.00	100.00	
10-Year	NX18100A	2.625%	01-May-28	103.99	104.10	104.00	
15-Year	NZ13100X	3.375%	01-Sep-33	111.96	112.18	111.95	
20-Year	NZ16100X	2.250%	01-Aug-36	96.97	97.40	97.05	
30-Year	NA16100H	2.750%	01-Mar-46	103.19	103.25	103.20	

Note: Based on latest issue

Source: Monetary Authority of Singapore

MSCI INDICES

Jan 31	Index	In local curr %	% dy	% yr
World Preliminary	1543.8	0.6	7.1	
EMEA Preliminary	1061.9	0.3	5.4	
Europe Preliminary	1481.8	0.0	5.5	
Australia	1177.2	-0.6	3.2	
Austria Preliminary	540.4	-0.6	8.5	
Belgium Preliminary	1000.4	0.8	9.4	
Canada Preliminary	1987.8	0.3	8.6	
Denmark Preliminary	7636.2	-0.7	3.1	
Finland Preliminary	704.4	-1.5	7.9	
France Preliminary	1806.4	0.2	5.4	
Germany Preliminary	894.4	-0.5	6.0	
Greece Preliminary	45.6	-1.2	5.2	
India	1260.8	1.6	-0.2	
Indonesia	7464.5	1.2	5.5	
Ireland Preliminary	190.7	-0.6	6.4	
Israel Preliminary	255.1	0.3	10.6	
Italy Preliminary	670.3	0.0	7.7	
Japan	940.0	1.0	5.2	
Korea	664.2	-0.2	9.9	
Malaysia	584.2	0.1	0.4	
Netherlands Preliminary	1558.5	-0.3	6.9	
New Zealand	135.7	1.2	2.3	
Norway Preliminary	2883.5	-0.1	3.5	
Pakistan	413.6	-0.2	15.9	
Philippines	1358.4	0.0	7.6	
Portugal Preliminary	84.5	0.8	4.6	
Singapore	1662.1	0.4	4.2	
Singapore Free	357.4	0.4	4.2	

Source: MSCI

Company Briefs

CapitalLand Retail China Trust

CapitalLand Retail China Trust (CRCT) has entered a “bundle deal” to swap CapitaMall Saihan in Hohhot, the capital of Inner Mongolia, China, which has the earliest land tenure expiry among CRCT’s assets, for a new mall that is double in size, is better located and has eight more years in its balance tenure.

Jinyu New World Plaza in Yuquan district, Hohhot, has an agreed property value of 808.3 million yuan (\$816.1 million). CRCT targets to take over the property in the second half of this year and open the mall in the second half of next year. The mall has a gross floor area (GFA) of 100,047.39 sq m and comprises eight floors for commercial purposes and two basement levels of car park space.

Upon the new mall’s opening, CRCT will transfer its entire interest in a company that holds CapitaMall Saihan to a party related to the vendor of the new mall for an agreed property value of 460 million yuan. CRCT will close and hand over CapitaMall Saihan, which has a GFA of 41,938 sq m, to the new owner by the second half of next year.

CRCT also reported yesterday that its distribution per unit (DPU) rose 2.1 per cent to 2.42 cents for the fourth quarter ended Dec 31 from its year-ago payout. Its distributable income increased 7.7 per cent year on year to \$23.7 million, while net property income rose 8.8 per cent to \$35.9 million. Gross revenue for the fourth quarter rose by \$1.6 million, or three per cent, to \$55.7 million. The increase was mainly due to stronger rental growth from multi-tenanted malls, said the trust’s manager.

Hyflux

Water treatment firm Hyflux yesterday called for its creditors to file proofs of claim ahead of scheme meetings as the company undergoes debt restructuring.

The proofs, which will form a basis to vote on scheme proposals and to receive payments, must be submitted by 5pm on Feb 15.

For holders of the company’s bonds, perpetual securities and preference shares, however, their holdings as recorded by the Central Depository (CDP) will be treated as proofs even if the holders do not file their claims, Hyflux said.

Any party who is required to but does not file a proof of claim by the deadline will not be entitled to vote at scheme meetings and may not be entitled to any payments or distributions, subject to the discretion of the scheme meeting’s proposed chairman.

The group filed for bankruptcy protection in May last year, and investors still have no certainty about how much is recoverable.

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With Deepest Sympathy & Heartfelt Condolences to
The Family of Our Late Director



MR EWE CHEN FOONG
Departed on 31 January 2019

From
The Management & Staff of

Vistron

Vistron Pte Ltd

The Representative Office of Vistron Pte Ltd in Hanoi

*Wake is held at Blk 236 Choa Chu Kang Central,
Singapore 680236.*

Memorial Service will be held on 2 Feb (Sat) at 8pm.

*Cortege leaves on Sunday, 3 February 2019 at 8.30am for
Mandai Crematorium Hall 3 for cremation at 9.40am.*

"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me." Psalm 23:4

THOMBIYAS ELIZABETH (LUCY)
Age : 67
was called home to be with the Lord on 1 February 2019 leaving behind loved ones.

Husband: Raymond Balakrishnan Prabhakaran
Sons: Christopher, B P Jackson
Daughters: Christina, Jacqueline
sons-in law, daughter-in-law, granddaughter, grandsons, relatives and friends.

Wake is held at 514 Bukit Batok Street 52, Singapore 650514.

Cortege leaves on Sunday, 3 February 2019 at 1.15p.m. for Mass at St. Joseph Church (Bukit Timah) 620 Upper Bukit Timah Rd, Singapore 678116, at 2p.m. thereafter for Mandai Crematorium Hall 3 for cremation at 3.45p.m.

Dinner will be served at wake location after the cremation.
NO GARLANDS please.

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9th Anniversary
 Alice Wong Siew Chin
Departed 23 Nov 2010

5th Anniversary
 Jeffrey Yap Yen Thoong
Departed 2 Feb 2014

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and Forever Missed
Forever remembered by your Children, Children-In-Law,
Grandchildren & loved ones.*

ANBA ARASAN S/O NADESAN
Age: 40
passed away peacefully on 31/1/2019. Dearly missed and fondly remembered by loved ones.

Body is resting at Blk 210 Bukit Batok St 21, #07-220 S650210. Cortege will leave on 3/2/2019 (Sunday) at 5pm for Mandai Crematorium Hall 4 for cremation at 6.30pm. Tel: 98573949

*"In memoriam"
is for the loved
ones whom you
remember...*

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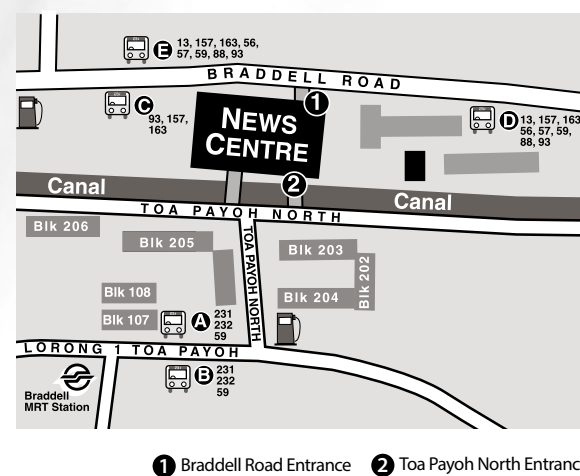
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BigMatch

CITY UP FOR TITLE TILT: PEP

Manager insists his team will continue to attempt to overhaul leaders Liverpool

LONDON • Pep Guardiola has denied Manchester City are lacking motivation in their bid to reel in Premier League leaders Liverpool.

The champions blew a golden opportunity to close the gap to one point in midweek when they slumped to a shock loss at Newcastle and they rued that even more the day after when the Reds dropped two points at home to Leicester.

At his pre-match press conference yesterday, Guardiola was in a defiant mood, claiming his players “would not be here” if they were not up for “the challenge”.

He told reporters: “We are not happy about the last performance. We knew immediately at half-time and after, we know that.

“(But) that is the process many times when people say (we are) the perfect team and invincibles. Every game is a challenge to see what we can do better and how we can beat the opponents.

“All the results this week it was difficult for (Manchester) United and the teams in the top six to win their games. There are a lot of games and to sustain, it is tough.”

Although he was comforted after the Liverpool draw, he warned his players if “their level was the last game, (then) it doesn’t matter”.



Following their shock loss to Newcastle, Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola has issued his men a wake-up call ahead of a tricky game against Arsenal tomorrow. PHOTO: EPA-EFE

The 48-year-old also brushed off the controversy surrounding a now-deleted tweet from City defender Kyle Walker, who appeared to mock the league front runners following their slip-up at Anfield, saying he was “not concerned as I can’t control it”.

Turning his attention to their league game with Arsenal at the Etihad tomorrow, Guardiola felt Unai Emery’s men “were a tough side”, before singling out Granit Xhaka, Lucas Torreira, Alexandre Lacazette and Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang as their dangers.

New loanee Denis Suarez will likely be given his debut against his former club given that Arsenal have “a lot of problems with wingers”.

The Spain midfielder, who made only two appearances for City from

His manager Emery also backed the 25-year-old to win over naysayers like pundit Alan Smith, who has dismissed him as nothing more than a “squad player”.

The former Arsenal striker told the Mirror: “How much will he play though? Arsenal fans would have loved to have seen a little bit more business in January.”

But Emery defended their lack of activity in the market, insisting Suarez’s qualities “can help us”.

He said at his pre-game interview: “I know the player (the Spaniard coached him at Sevilla in the 2014-15 season). He started individual training yesterday and today, with the group.

“He has adapted very quickly and also his ambition, he wants to do something important here. It is a good challenge for him and for us.”

Denying that Suarez’s arrival meant there would be even less playing time for Mesut Ozil, Emery insisted there was “no change” in the squad’s pecking order.

He also confirmed his side’s defensive crisis had eased up slightly, with captain Laurent Koscielny back in full training and in contention to play against Guardiola’s men. AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

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BigMatch

EMERY MUST GET TACTICS SPOT ON

Short on defenders, Arsenal should use a back three to stifle City wingers and spring counters

Richard Jolly

It is a barometer of progress. Unai Emery's Arsenal bow was against Manchester City. Six months after City cruised to a 2-0 victory, they meet again at the Etihad Stadium tomorrow.

While the champions' title chances were dented by Tuesday's 2-1 defeat by Newcastle United, the burden of proof lies with the visitors. Emery's Arsenal have shown in

heartening wins against Tottenham Hotspur (4-2) and Chelsea (2-0) that they can beat some of their peers.

But not the top two, and not away from home. Three trips to the elite have produced a solitary point – against Jose Mourinho's troubled Manchester United.

City present an altogether stiffer challenge. It is no coincidence they scored three goals against Arsenal thrice last season. They have specialised in exploiting defensive failings and highlighting a gulf in class.

Emery, meanwhile, has never beaten Pep Guardiola and is without three of his first-choice back four. The temptation is to wish him luck, because he will need it.

Emery is tactically flexible – injuries have meant he has needed to be – but has alighted on a 4-diamond-2 of late.

It has the advantage of pairing his striking trump cards, Alexandre Lacazette and Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang.

They represent Arsenal's best chance of victory. Each could prosper if City's full-backs get too far forward, leaving them one-on-one with the centre backs. City's high defensive line is risky against the

Gabonese Aubameyang's pace.

Aaron Ramsey excelled at the tip of the diamond against Chelsea on Jan 20, subduing Jorginho.

The Welsh midfielder could be given a similar role against City's Fernandinho, looking to emulate Newcastle's Sean Longstaff, who harried the Brazilian out of possession and won a penalty on Tuesday.

The problem comes elsewhere.

Four-diamond-2 is very narrow. City play with great width and have the league's two most productive out-and-out wingers in Leroy Sane and Raheem Sterling.

When Arsenal went to Anfield in December with a back four, they conceded five goals with Sead Ko-

lasinac miscast as a left-back.

So Emery ought to revert to a back three, which he used in the 4-2 victory over Spurs. Besides allowing the attack-minded Kolasinac to operate as a wing-back, a 3-5-2 means the wide centre backs can offer cover against the City wingers.

One problem, minus Hector Bellerin, Rob Holding and Sokratis Papastathopoulos, is finding enough capable defenders.

Emery could do with having Laurent Koscielny and Ainsley Maitland-Niles fit, so he can adopt a policy of safety in numbers at the back.

His side should defend deep, positioning Granit Xhaka and Lucas Torreira in front of the centre backs to

stop City's attacking midfielders, and spring counter-attacks.

Emery's 4-diamond-2 has been caused in part by a lack of wingers, hence Thursday's loan signing of former City player Denis Suarez from Barcelona.

Yet the newcomer should form Plan B to allow a switch to 4-2-3-1.

Given Arsenal's defensive frailties, they cannot afford to start with such an attacking system.

They cannot be too naive.

stsports@sph.com.sg

MAN CITY V ARSENAL

Singtel TV Ch102 & StarHub Ch227, Monday, 12.30am

Match points: Manchester City v Arsenal



Key battles

Leroy Sane v Ainsley Maitland-Niles

Sane was benched for City's trip to the Emirates in August. He has reclaimed his place and has four assists in his last four games. Maitland-Niles faced City as a left-back in the summer. Now, in Hector Bellerin's absence, the midfielder may be used at right-back or right wing-back. He is a better option than the ageing Stephan Lichtsteiner.



John Stones v Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang

Aubameyang's pace ought to equip him for away games, where there tends to be more space on the break, but seven of his last eight goals have come at home. The Premier League's top scorer is nonetheless quicker than Stones, who would hope his close friend Kyle Walker tucks in and can keep up with Aubameyang.



Kevin de Bruyne v Granit Xhaka

This could be de Bruyne's first league start of the season against top-six opponents. Bernardo Silva, who has scored in his last two games against Arsenal, would be unlucky to be benched. Xhaka will have to prevent the Belgian from shooting from long range. He should also be aware of how good a crosser he is from infield.



Key statistics

Superiority

W7 D4 L0

Manchester City's Pep Guardiola has never lost in 11 meetings with Arsenal counterpart Unai Emery.

+46

Points advantage City have over the Gunners since the beginning of last season.

Rampage

24

Goals the champions have scored in their last four games at the Etihad.

9

Goals City have scored against Arsenal since last conceding to them in November 2017.

Men to watch

2

Average goals per game City striker Gabriel Jesus has in his last four starts.



2

Arsenal's new loan signing Denis Suarez played twice for City.



TEXT: RICHARD JOLLY PHOTOS: REUTERS, AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Azpilicueta issues rallying call to 'angry' Blues

LONDON • Chelsea captain Cesar Azpilicueta hopes Maurizio Sarri's decision to hold a lengthy inquest after their defeat by Bournemouth can reignite their stuttering season, as they prepare to host bottom club Huddersfield today.

Sarri's side were crushed 4-0 on Wednesday in a shocking setback that was Chelsea's heaviest Premier League loss since 1996.

Not for the first time this season, the Blues paid the price for failing to turn first-half possession into goals, collapsing after the interval as Bournemouth punished the sloppy defending of David Luiz and Antonio Rudiger.

Chelsea's fifth defeat in their last 12 league games cost them their

place in the top four. Arsenal moved above them on goals scored and Sarri, who arrived from Napoli in July, is fighting for his job.

The furious Italian asked his backroom staff to leave the Chelsea dressing room at Dean Court as he staged a 40-minute post-mortem alone with his squad.

Azpilicueta admitted that tempers had frayed because the performance was so far below the expected standard for the 2016-17 Premier League champions.

"Afterwards, we spoke as men between the manager and players," he said. "To lose 4-0 as Chelsea players is unacceptable. We are very angry and have to find solutions."

Sarri, 60, has risked losing the

backing of his players with several scathing assessments of their displays this season.

But the Italian, yet to win a major trophy as a manager, conceded he might also be to blame as he admitted needing to find a better way to motivate his stars.

While it might be too soon for Sarri to worrying about his job, he desperately needs a repeat of the solid form Chelsea showed during the 18-game unbeaten run that marked the start of his reign.

Since then, he has come under fire from Chelsea fans, who chanted "You don't know what you're doing" at him when he took off new striker Gonzalo Higuain against Bournemouth.

Playing Eden Hazard out of position as a forward and sticking with Jorginho as a defensive midfielder instead of the proven N'Golo Kante have been the two biggest issues with Sarri's tactics.

As the race to qualify for the Champions League grows tighter, with sixth-placed Manchester United only two points behind Chelsea, Azpilicueta knows every match is crucial.

"It is very tight. Two weeks ago, we were in a better position. We have put ourselves at risk," he said.

"We are in trouble after dropping six points in the last two games. It's become harder, but we have to get the three points on Saturday; there is no other option.

"The minimum we should do is qualify for the Champions League."

New Huddersfield boss Jan Siewert has identified Chelsea's vulnerabilities, but said his own side must simply focus on building on their encouraging display in the 1-0 home defeat by Everton on Tuesday.

The German said: "I saw some situations in which they were vulnerable but, to be honest, it will be a totally different game."

"I know Maurizio Sarri is a fantastic manager and we have to face everything which they give us."

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

CHELSEA V HUDDERSFIELD

Singtel TV Ch102 & StarHub Ch227, 11pm

NO ROOM FOR ERROR

We are in trouble after dropping six points in the last two games. It's become harder, but we have to get the three points on Saturday; there is no other option.

”

CESAR AZPILICUETA, Chelsea captain, on what the team must do against Huddersfield today.

Qatar stun Japan 3-1 in final to win first Asian Cup



Almoez Ali scoring with an overhead kick in the 12th minute to give Qatar the lead against Japan in yesterday's Asian Cup final at the Zayed Sports City Stadium in Abu Dhabi. His goal bettered Iranian Ali Daei's 1996 tally of eight goals at a single continental championship. Qatar, hosts of the 2022 World Cup, won their first major honour in international football when they stunned four-time champions Japan 3-1. The Sudan-born 22-year-old Ali and his teammate Bassam Al-Rawi were the subject of a protest by the UAE Football Association over their eligibility to represent Qatar, but this was dismissed by the Asian Football Confederation hours before the kick-off. Midfielder Abdulaziz Hatem doubled the lead in the 27th minute before Takumi Minamino pulled one back in the 69th minute to set up a grandstand finish. The Qataris sealed victory in the 83rd minute when Akram Afif converted a penalty after Japanese captain Maya Yoshida handled the ball in the area. PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

TOTTENHAM STILL IN TITLE RACE: SON

South Korean star says self-belief is key as Pochettino recalls Janssen to first team

LONDON • Tottenham Hotspur will once again look to Son Heung-min for inspiration in the absence of injured captain Harry Kane and midfielder Dele Alli as they take on Newcastle United, who shocked champions Manchester City in midweek. The South Korean played his first English Premier League match on Wednesday since returning from the Asian Cup and was the standout player against Watford as he netted their crucial equaliser before Spurs ran out 2-1 winners. Mauricio Pochettino knows how much he needs Son in the absence of Kane and Alli, even if he is aware of the need to avoid burnout. "He finished very tired, with some cramp. We're going to see if he can recover for the next game,"

said the Spurs boss after the win. "If he's okay, maybe he's going to be in the starting XI, if not on the bench. For sure if we need him, he's going to help the team." Spurs remain seven points adrift of league leaders Liverpool but are now just two points behind second-placed Manchester City. And Son is adamant that the north London side can still win the Premier League title this season. "I don't care that people are saying Liverpool or Man City," he said. "We are still there, we're going for it. They're very good sides like us. We have to just focus on ourselves. "Every single game, get three points, that's most important. We just believe in our own game, get as many points as possible, and see

what happens at the end of the season." With Kane still sidelined and Fernando Llorente the only backup striker, Pochettino has welcomed forgotten man Vincent Janssen back into the first-team fold. The Dutch striker, who has been turning out for Spurs' Under-23 side this season as he sought a move away to get his career back on track, had been expected to depart on deadline day on Thursday. But, despite being linked with several clubs, Spurs found no takers for Janssen at their price point. Pochettino is now ready to give the 24-year-old a chance to revive his career in England, especially after Mousa Dembele left for China and Georges-Kevin Nkoudou completed a loan move to Monaco. Asked about Janssen in a press conference yesterday, Pochettino said: "From today, he will be involved in the first team."

Pochettino also gave an update on Kane's recovery from an ankle injury sustained against Manchester United last month. The England international has posted a video on social media which shows that he is already back in light training. Asked if Kane might be back sooner than the early March date which was originally suggested, Pochettino said: "He is showing on social media that he looks very strong and very fit..." "He is very strong and will put in 200 per cent to try and return as soon as possible. We need to assess, but we are happy in the way that he is recovering." On Alli, who injured his hamstring against Fulham, Pochettino added: "Dele is the same as Harry - he is doing well." AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

TOTTENHAM V NEWCASTLE
Singtel TV Ch102 &
StarHub Ch227, 8.30pm

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

TODAY
Tottenham v Newcastle
Ch102 & Ch227, 8.30pm
Chelsea v Huddersfield
Ch102 & Ch227, 11pm
Burnley v Southampton
Ch103 & Ch228, 11pm
Brighton v Watford
Ch104 & Ch229, 11pm
Palace v Fulham
Ch105 & Ch230, 11pm
Everton v Wolves
Ch106 & Ch231, 11pm
Cardiff v Bournemouth
Ch102 & Ch227,
tomorrow, 1.30am

TOMORROW
Leicester v Man United
Ch102 & Ch227, 10.05pm
Man City v Arsenal
Ch102 & Ch227,
Monday, 12.30am

MONDAY
West Ham v Liverpool
Ch102 & Ch227, Tuesday, 4am

STANDINGS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Liverpool	24	19	4	1	55	14	61
2 Man City	24	18	2	4	63	19	56
3 Tottenham	24	18	0	6	50	24	54
4 Arsenal	24	14	5	5	50	33	47
5 Chelsea	24	14	5	5	40	23	47
6 Man Utd	24	13	6	5	48	35	45
7 Wolves	24	10	5	9	30	31	35
8 Everton	24	9	6	9	35	33	33
9 Watford	24	9	6	9	33	34	33
10 Bournemouth	24	10	3	11	37	42	33
11 Leicester	24	9	5	10	30	30	32
12 West Ham	24	9	4	11	30	37	31
13 Brighton	24	7	5	12	27	36	26
14 Newcastle	24	6	6	12	21	32	24
15 Crystal Palace	24	6	5	13	24	33	23
16 Southampton	24	5	8	11	26	41	23
17 Burnley	24	6	5	13	25	45	23
18 Cardiff	24	5	4	15	20	46	19
19 Fulham	24	4	5	15	25	53	17
20 Huddersfield	24	2	5	17	13	41	11

Davis Cup targets wider reach with LaLiga backing

MADRID • Spanish football's wealthy LaLiga is to become a sponsor of tennis' revamped Davis Cup competition for the next four years, sports bodies said on Thursday. Founded in 1900, the Davis Cup is the largest annual international team competition in sport, but has suffered as a spectacle since many top players began opting out. To breathe life into the tournament, the International Tennis Federation (ITF) signed a 25-year deal worth US\$3 billion (S\$4.05 billion) last year with an investment group

called Kosmos, fronted by Barcelona footballer Gerard Pique. It will now comprise a week-long, World Cup-style knockout event between 18 countries at the end of the regular season. This year's finals are in Madrid in November. "The cross-sport partnership with LaLiga is innovative for the Davis Cup," ITF president David Haggarty said of the new sponsorship arrangement. "This will widen our reach to not only tennis fans but other sports enthusiasts."

No financial details were given. LaLiga will promote the Davis Cup via international broadcasts in 200 countries during league matches throughout October. They have also teamed up for the Davis Cup qualifiers, starting this weekend, in which 12 winners will seal places at the finals in Madrid alongside already qualified Croatia, France, the United States, Spain, Argentina and Britain. LaLiga sponsored Spain's 2016 Davis Cup tie in India, while last year it announced a partnership with the Renault Formula 1 team. It also supports Spain's 64 sporting federations. "LaLiga is pleased to partner Kosmos Tennis as it represents a great opportunity to link our brand and those of our clubs with a worldwide sport and entertainment icon," said Oscar Mayo, LaLiga's international business development director. REUTERS



Croatia, with the Davis Cup after beating France, will defend the trophy under a new format. PHOTO: REUTERS

\$4.05b

Value of the International Tennis Federation's deal with the Gerard Pique-headed investment group Kosmos.

DEADLINE DAY ENDS WITH LITTLE DRAMA



Veteran striker Peter Crouch, 38, was the surprise mover of the day as he signed for Premier League strugglers Burnley until the end of the season. He is part of a swap deal with Championship side Stoke City which sees Burnley forward Sam Vokes moving the other way. ST FILE PHOTO

News analysis

Four key factors account for anti-climactic transfer window



James Walton

If you had said at the start of January that the biggest deadline-day deal would be made by Newcastle, many would have thought you crazy. However, when you consider that the biggest excitement of the last 24 hours surrounded the tussle to take Michy Batshuayi on loan and a new contract for Anthony Martial, it is easy to see why many consider this transfer window to have been an anti-climax.

Besides Batshuayi's last-minute loan move to Crystal Palace, deadline day also saw loan moves for Lazar Markovic, Havard Nordtveit, Youri Tielemans, Antonio Barreca, Georges-Kevin Nkoudou and Andy King. But, in terms of buys, besides Newcastle's modest and yet record-breaking £21 million (\$37 million) signing of Miguel Almiron from Major League Soccer, the next biggest transfer was Wolves making Jonny Otto's loan deal into a permanent transfer. It was that kind of day.

While clubs across the top five European leagues completed 495 deals in total worth £567.9 million, this pales in comparison to last year's £817.1 million amassed from 574 deals and a window that saw Philippe Coutinho, Virgil van Dijk, Aymeric Laporte, Pierre-Emerick

Aubameyang, Cenk Tosun and Lucas Moura move for bigger fees than Almiron.

While there was one Premier League transfer bigger than Almiron's – the £58 million transfer of Christian Pulisic from Borussia Dortmund to Chelsea saw an immediate loan-back – we won't be seeing this window's most expensive player play in the league until at least August.

However, while still comparatively low, 2019's window was somewhat of a return to the norm. The 2017 window saw £651.6 million spent in the big five leagues so we must view 2018 as an outlier for January activity.

In Premier League terms, again this year was a return to normalcy after last year's bumper expenditure of £149.15 million on deadline day. This year, the total mid-season window spending was only just above that incredible one-day amount – roughly £180 million after adding the final-day £35 million – with eight of the 20 EPL clubs not bringing in a single player.

So why was there so little inactivity at the top and bottom end of the Premier League table?

There seems to be a few factors at play.

First, many of the top teams seem to be quite content to keep a settled squad as they move into the second part of the season.

Tottenham, for all their injury woes, have issues with their squad nationality composition and believe that their players are returning to fitness soon and so were more active in loaning out than bringing in; Manchester

In Premier League terms, again this year was a return to normalcy after last year's bumper expenditure of £149.15 million on deadline day. This year, the total mid-season window spending of £180 million was only just above that incredible one-day amount.

United are on something of a roll and Manchester City and Liverpool already have good competition in their squads.

Two teams needed a little bit of a lift. Chelsea hoped they had got that in the swap of Gonzalo Higuain for Alvaro Morata, but he will want to forget his debut quickly. Arsenal were constrained by their high net spend in the last two windows, restricting them to only a loan deal for Dennis Suarez, although they did try to do more.

More surprisingly, the teams fighting relegation, with the exception of Newcastle, didn't seem keen to be too active either in spite of the high price of dropping down a division come May.

Second, although the record TV deals mean that EPL clubs have money to burn, it also means that the traditional "feeder" clubs no longer have any need to sell. This has driven up prices considerably and reduced the likelihood of finding a bargain.

Third, sometimes windows just need one big signing to start a chain. But, simply, that didn't happen with the largest intra-EPL deal being Dominic Solanke's £17 million move to Bournemouth from Liverpool, who have no pressing need to replace him.

Finally, Brexit seems to be playing a part: both in terms of uncertainty about the economic conditions in the coming months and also because of a lack of clarity about how foreign players may be affected by the revocation of free movement of workers from the EU.

This all bodes for an active summer – in a year with no major international tournament to disrupt the window, more certainty on the post-Brexit rules for the clubs sitting on piles of money should see a flurry of activity.

And who knows, maybe Spurs will even sign a player at last.

stsports@sph.com.sg

• James Walton is the sports business group leader at Deloitte Singapore and South-east Asia.

Crouch joins Burnley in surprise return to EPL; Newcastle splash the cash for Almiron

LONDON • While there was little significant activity at relegation-threatened Premier League clubs – apart from Newcastle United – bucking the trend of last-gasp, big-money transfers in a bid to try to survive, an old face returned to the English top flight on deadline day.

Burnley cheekily referred to the robot celebration popularised by Peter Crouch as they announced his signing on their social media accounts on Thursday evening.

The veteran striker, who has yet to start a game since last September, moved in a swap deal with Championship side Stoke City, with forward Sam Vokes heading the other way.

Despite joining at the age of 38 on a contract until the end of the season, Crouch, who has scored 108 goals in 462 league games, insisted that he was not washed up and "still wanted to achieve things".

The former England international said: "I want to get more games in the Premier League and would love to add to the 100 Premier League goals. It's a club that is stable in the Premier League now. We have got to make sure we stay there this year and build on that."

"I know I can impact games at this level. I scored goals last season in the Premier League and I know I will do the same again if given the opportunity this year."

Only 23 players have scored more than Crouch in the league and he just needs four more goals to climb into the top 20.

In addition to their £21 million (\$37 million) record buy of Paraguay midfielder Miguel Alm-

iron from Major League Soccer side Atlanta United, the Magpies landed Italy Under-21 defender Antonio Barreca on loan from struggling Monaco.

Leicester were also beneficiaries as the French Ligue 1 side trimmed their squad, taking Belgium midfielder Youri Tielemans on loan.

Elsewhere, Cardiff signed Leandro Bacuna, a Curacao utility player from Reading, but did not find a replacement for Argentinian striker Emiliano Sala, whose plane went down over the Channel Islands two days after signing for a club-record fee of £15 million.

Fulham moved for Serbia winger Lazar Markovic on a free transfer from Liverpool for the remainder of the season, after he was given a glowing endorsement by compatriot and club top-scorer Aleksandar Mitrovic.

Club co-owner Tony Khan, who also secured the services of Norway defender Havard Nordtveit on loan from Hoffenheim, felt Markovic would strengthen their attack.

He said: "Lazar Markovic is a gifted young player. He has the support of our manager (Claudio Ranieri)."

In Europe, Barcelona agreed a deal to sign Brazil Under-20 defender Emerson from Atletico Mineiro for £12 million (\$18.5 million) in the summer, while Japan midfielder Shinji Kagawa opted to leave German Bundesliga leaders Borussia Dortmund for a loan move to Turkish outfit Besiktas.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, REUTERS, THE TIMES, LONDON

LOTTERY		
TOTO	Fri, 1 Feb 2019	Draw No. 3445/2019
	Group 1 Prize \$5,000,000	
Winning Numbers		
05	11	16 17 22 27
Add. No.		
10		

Information on winning shares is not available at press time. Kindly visit singaporepools.com for details.

Draw Venue: Singapore Pools (Private) Limited, 210 Middle Road, #01-01, Singapore 188994

SPORTS FIXTURES HIGHLIGHTS				
Event	Home	Away	Timing	Venue
Sat, 2 Feb 2019				
A League	Central Coast	Melbourne Vict	2.35pm	LW
A League	Adelaide	Brisbane Roar	4.50pm	LW
Spanish League	Levante	Getafe	8.00pm	LW / SB
English Premier	Tottenham	Newcastle	8.30pm	LW / SB
Italian League	Empoli	Chievo	10.00pm	LW / SB
German League	E Frankfurt	Dortmund	10.30pm	LW / SB
German League	Leverkusen	Bayern Munich	10.30pm	LW / SB
English Premier	Brighton	Watford	11.00pm	LW / SB
English Premier	Burnley	Southampton	11.00pm	LW / SB
English Premier	Chelsea	Huddersfield	11.00pm	LW / SB
Sun, 3 Feb 2019				
Italian League	Napoli	Sampdoria	1.00am	LW / SB
English Premier	Cardiff	Bournemouth	1.30am	LW / SB
English League Champ	Leeds	Norwich	1.30am	LW / SB
German League	Schalke 04	Monchengladbach	1.30am	LW / SB
Spanish League	Barcelona	Valencia	1.30am	LW / SB
Italian League	Juventus	Parma	3.30am	LW

Visit singaporepools.com for the latest 'Live' telecast listing.

Wishing You a
Happy Lunar New Year

Outlet Operating Hours & Draw Times

during Lunar New Year period

Eve of Lunar New Year

Outlets open till 4pm.

Mon, 4 Feb 2019

TOTO draw as usual.

1st day of Lunar New Year

Outlets will be closed.

Tue, 5 Feb 2019

2nd day of Lunar New Year

Usual operating hours will resume for outlets.

Wed, 6 Feb 2019

SINGAPORE SWEEP draw as usual.

Normal operating hours for all Livewire venues throughout the Lunar New Year period except Livewire (Singapore Pools Building) which is open till 4pm on Eve of Lunar New Year, Mon, 4 Feb 2019 and 1pm - 6pm on Tue, 5 Feb 2019. Timing may vary across outlets.

Cheque payment

For prize amounts above \$5,000, please visit Singapore Pools Main Branch (210 Middle Road) for cheque collection. Note:

- Lunar New Year Eve (Mon, 4 Feb 2019): Close at 4pm
- First Day (Tue, 5 Feb 2019) and Second Day (Wed, 6 Feb 2019) of Lunar New Year: Close
- Third Day of Lunar Year (Thu, 7 Feb 2019): Open as usual

Due to the Lunar New Year period, longer than usual waiting time is expected. Thank you for your understanding.

No person under the age of 18 years shall be allowed to purchase a ticket or to claim any prize.
LW: Livewire (MBS) & Livewire (RWS) (21 years and above)
Livewire (Singapore Pools) (21 years and above during 'Live' telecast)
SB: Sportsbuzz@Cove (21 years and above)
Singapore Pools Account Service. Call 6796 6668 for more details.

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RCB Reg No.: 198020205

FANCIED DUO TAKE SINGLES TITLES

Yeo overcomes injured opponent while Loh deals well with pressure following recent feat

Laura Chia

Twice she trailed, at first by four points and then by two but, each time, Yeo Jia Min bounced back to clinch the game, and eventually the match and winner's cheque.

The \$1,000 prize for her 21-17, 21-12 victory over Jaslyn Hooi in the women's singles final at the Singapore National Open Championships last night should come in handy today.

Her first national Open title was a fitting birthday marker for Yeo, who turned 20 yesterday, and the world No. 42 added that she would probably use her winnings to give her family members a treat.

She said: "My family said they would celebrate my birthday tomorrow if I won today, so I'm happy that I will get to celebrate then."

World No. 447 Hooi put up a good fight in front of over 200 spectators

at the Singapore Badminton Hall despite suffering an abdominal muscle injury in the women's doubles semi-finals on Thursday.

The 18-year-old led 10-6 in the first game, but Yeo fought her way back with powerful smashes to lead 14-13 before winning the first game.

In the second, Hooi was leading 5-3 before the pain worsened, making it difficult for her to stand up straight. Yeo then reeled off the next four points and never looked back.

"(Because of my injury) today a lot of shots I could have gone for, I didn't," said Hooi, who was fourth at the Youth Olympic Games in Argentina in October.

"But I'm still very grateful that I got to play with Jia Min because she's at a higher level than me."

Said Yeo: "I was trying to focus on my game play. I wasn't affected by the score as I focused more on my performance."



Also claiming his first national Open title was world No. 71 Loh Kean Yew, who beat 18-year-old Lee Wei Hong 21-12, 21-17 in the men's singles final.

Loh, 21, said: "I'm happy to play in front of the home crowd and I'm glad that many people came to watch and support so I want to thank them as well."

Admitting that he felt additional pressure after making headlines following his stunning victory over

Chinese great Lin Dan in the Thailand Masters last month, he added: "There were a lot expectations from the spectators and from myself, but I tried to manage it well and just tried to enjoy the game as much as possible."

Both Yeo and Loh had spent three months late last year training in Denmark and will be returning to Europe soon to compete as they attempt to qualify for next year's Tokyo Olympics.

Yeo said: "It's very important that I continue improving... In the singles, Kean Yew and I are the ones who will try to make it to the Olympics so I think they (the Singapore Badminton Association and fans) want to see more results from us as well."

"But I don't want to give myself pressure. Every game is a new game so I'll just go in and do my best."

Birthday girl Yeo Jia Min (above) trailed Jaslyn Hooi in both games during the women's singles final of the Singapore National Open Championships last night but, each time, she clawed her way back into contention and eventually victory.

ST PHOTO: KEVIN LIM

claura@sph.com.sg

InGoodConscience

Jiggers found in raid on top Aussie trainer's stables



Rob Hughes

Six dawn raids on stables run by Australia's most successful trainer on Wednesday raised shocking questions about the integrity in horse racing. Worse, they make us ashamed of man's inhumanity to animals.

The trainer, Darren Weir, and two of his assistants were questioned for eight hours, then released without charge. But Victoria Police Assistant Commissioner Neil Paterson said the investigation remains ongoing into sporting corruption, seeking to gain financial advantage in betting, and animal cruelty.

Detectives seized four devices, known as "jiggers", which can give a horse an electric shocks to make it run faster. They also confiscated an unlicensed gun and cocaine.

The Australian newspaper reported that scientists are examining urine samples from horses for evidence of illegal

synthetic drugs imported from China, and there are allegations of snake venom injected into horses to act as a nerve blocker to mask pain.

The police were called in last August by Racing Victoria shortly after the turf authority was accused of lacking diligence after a doping scandal that ended with another trainer and stable staff banned from racing for life after doping horses.

"One of the darkest and longest chapters in Australian turf history," the judge described that.

The chapter that came to light after the dawn raids on three stables run by Weir could outrun that darkness.

As he left the police station, Weir gave a thumbs up and smiled for the cameras. But Assistant Commissioner Paterson intimated that investigations had barely begun. "I have heard that there may be footage in the public arena of jiggers being used," the police chief said, asking for informants to come forward.

The electric shock device, about the size of a small battery, revives memories of an obnoxious practice known as "rapping" in showjumping in the 1960s and 70s.

Renowned German rider, breeder and trainer Paul

Schockemohle was among those secretly filmed hitting horses legs with a stick, using pain to startle them into jumping higher.

That was an era when nails were left protruding from fence poles, and electric wires, even hedgehog skins were attached to the poles to hurt the animals enough to make them lift their legs.

That was banned. So is the electronic shock appliance over which another Aussie trainer, Paul Preusker, was banned for four years in Victoria in 2007.

Weir was presumably aware of that offence. He was by then well established as a trainer, having left school at 15 and worked his way up from stablehand to farrier, then track rider, obtaining his trainer's licence at 25.

He is legendary now. His career high was to saddle Prince of Penzance, the rank outsider, to win the 2015 Melbourne Cup, the longest odds winner ever in that classic. It also broke new ground, the first Melbourne Cup winner ridden by a woman, Michelle Payne.

Unconventional, at times uncanny, Weir has piled up 3,452 winners, including 36 group one races. His tally in 2018 alone amounted to 491 winners, accumulating A\$31 million

(S\$30.4 million) in prize money.

He has the trust of some of the country's most well-heeled owners, putting some 400 horses into his care.

One leading owner, Terry Henderson, said the morning after the arrests that he was shocked by the allegations and hoped he has not been "hoodwinked" by Weir.

Maybe that is a tad naive, for surely Henderson heard the stories, or was aware of previous

The Australian newspaper reported that scientists are examining urine samples from horses for evidence of illegal synthetic drugs imported from China, and there are allegations of snake venom injected into horses to act as a nerve blocker to mask pain.

run-ins Weir has had with authority. Last September, Weir was fined A\$5,000 for false or misleading statements over the identity of seven horses.

In 2016, he escaped charges after one horse Signoff was disqualified after testing positive for ibuprofen.

And, in 2008, Weir was fined because of a higher than permitted sodium bicarbonate level in a horse.

That substance is banned by the Australian Veterinary Association, whose president Paul Martin said last year it could be used to counteract lactic acid build-up in racehorses and cause a delay in the onset of fatigue, giving "a 1 per cent edge" in a race.

Horse racing, the attraction for billions in betting stakes, has no choice. It has to be seen as being clean.

The stables run by Weir are clean until proved otherwise. So the morning after the arrests, they were up and running.

"Our main aim is to ensure our owners are not disadvantaged by this process in any way," read a statement from Weir's business manager. "Accordingly, it is business as usual in relation to the training and care of your horses."

stsports@sph.com.sg

SportsWorld

Floorballers qualify for world c'ship

Singapore have punched their ticket to a third straight Women's World Floorball Championship in Switzerland in December, after finishing fourth in the Asia-Oceania qualifiers in Bangkok yesterday.

They lost 5-4 to hosts Thailand in the third-place play-off while Australia also beat Japan 5-4 in the final.

Singapore were last among 16 teams in both the previous two biennial tournaments.

Tsunami threat sees Tokyo limit spectators

TOKYO • The organisers of next year's Olympic Games in Tokyo have decided to cut the number of spectators for the sailing events by a third so they can be quickly evacuated to higher ground in the event of a tsunami.

According to broadcaster NHK, the initial plan had been to allow for 5,000 people to watch the competition off the island of Enoshima, but the number has since been cut to 3,300 after discussions with local authorities. THE GUARDIAN

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THE STRAITS TIMES ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

PRESENTED BY 100PLUS



Nominee #3: Toh Wei Soong (para-swimming)

Aiming for wider role outside sport

Great year aside, youngster is proud of his efforts in school outreach and social causes

Wang Meng Meng

If 2018 could be a snapshot for Toh Wei Soong, his triumphant outings at the Commonwealth Games and Asian Para Games would be just a small part of a longer journey.

The way he sees it, he visualises life as a bigger picture that cannot be presented in just one frame.

And, far from admiring his impressive work last year, which earned him a nomination for The Straits Times' Athlete of the Year award, the swimmer wants to express and better himself, be it through writing, doing outreach, through social causes and, of course, swimming.

As the 20-year-old told ST: "This year, I would like to carry on the momentum of 2018. The principal in my junior college had a saying, 'Start strong, stay steady, end well'. I have taken that to heart.

"2018 was a strong start and I want to stay steady in 2019."

At last April's Commonwealth Games on Australia's Gold Coast, Toh, who races in the S7 classifica-

tion owing to the neurological condition transverse myelitis that limits the use of his lower limbs, won a bronze medal in the 50m freestyle, becoming the second Singaporean to win a swimming medal at the meet following Joseph Schooling's exploits in 2014.

But his finest hour came six months later in Jakarta. He won the Republic's first medal at the Asian Para Games – gold in the 50m free and followed it up with another gold in the 100m free and a bronze in the 50m backstroke.

Though his medal haul is impressive, it is his attitude that makes him special, according to Toh's coach Ang Peng Siong.

The former national swimmer said: "Wei Soong is driven if he decides on something. An inspirational moment was when he stood up to compete against able-bodied swimmers at championships. It takes a person with character to step up, not think about anything else and just achieve their goal."

But Toh feels he has so much more to give outside of his sport, saying: "Things were neglected when I was in school as I have lots of other interests, lots of plans and lists of movies and books I want to watch and read.



Para-swimmer Toh Wei Soong had a stellar 2018, winning a Commonwealth Games bronze and three medals, including two golds, at the Asian Para Games. But he hopes it is merely a stepping stone to bigger things. ST PHOTO: GAVIN FOO

"There's a great magnetism to these things, but I had to put them off until I finished schooling."

So last July, he wrote a novella about Otto, a rat trying to find his way in the world. He also visited Canberra and Meridian secondary schools to do outreach.

And, come August, he will enrol in the National University of Singapore, where he will apply his critical thinking skills in the philosophy, politics and economics programme.

He explained: "I always like to test myself and see what I could do when given the chance.

"(Fellow swimmers Yip) Pin Xiu and Theresa (Goh) are my inspiration and now I can use my position

to try to explain to students my story and show that it is not impossible (to taste success). My achievements don't seem as important as what I do in the schools."

Toh, who trains at the APS Swim School Singapore at Farrer Park, is also working on a project to conserve the historic site.

Last June, he started a website called The Lives of Farrer Park: Celebrating a National Sporting Legacy which collates stories of the place as told by past and present athletes as well as residents.

And that is perhaps the essence of the soft-spoken and deep-thinking young man, who sees a larger purpose than just fighting for swimming medals.

As he said: "The achievements always look wonderful and seem very definitive but, if you look at them as memories, they don't seem as potent. They seem diminished and faded. I am very happy (with the achievements) but I realise it's just one year in a bigger picture.

"Last year was a stepping stone and that's what every year in life is, it is going to lead to something else."

meng@sph.com.sg

SCAN TO WATCH
ST Athlete of the Year nominee, Toh Wei Soong:
str.sg/tohweisooong



BEYOND SUCCESS IN POOL

The achievements always look wonderful and seem very definitive but, if you look at them as memories, they don't seem as potent.



TOH WEI SOONG, Asian Para Games double gold medallist, on looking at the bigger picture in life.

100PLUS ACTIVE

Toh Wei Soong
Swimming

OUT DO YOUR SELF

Winners know true victory is about overcoming. The pain, exhaustion, when your body has given the clock everything it's got. You find your second wind. And fly. Leading the pack.



LOCAL GAMERS BATTLE FOR SPOTS

Selection process for SEA Games announced, with representatives to be decided by May

GREAT CHANCE

The SEA Games is a huge opportunity for us to change mindsets in Singapore about e-sports and I am very excited for the possibilities that it can bring.



JAYFSOH, owner of local e-sports outfit Resurgence, on the impact of the sport's inclusion at the 2019 SEA Games in the Philippines.

Lester Wong

Singapore's first SEA Games e-sports representatives will be unveiled in May, after the Singapore Esports Association announced its selection process for this year's edition of the biggest multi-sport competition in the region.

The Nov 30-Dec 11 SEA Games in the Philippines will feature six game titles, with five confirmed:

- Dota 2 and Starcraft II (PC)
- Tekken 7 (console)
- Arena of Valor and Mobile Legends (mobile).

The sixth is likely to be NBA 2K, but Games organisers have yet to issue official confirmation.

Two selection events will be held, with an open qualifier taking place next month before the top eight contest the national selection finals in May.

Two players each will be selected for Tekken 7 and Starcraft II, which are played in an individual format, with the other four titles team-based.

"We have taken careful steps to ensure the integrity and fairness of this selection process, in what is a historic milestone for e-sports in Singapore and South-east Asia," said the association's president Ng Chong Geng yesterday.

"The framework has been built to ensure that new and existing athletes – as well as overseas and veteran players – have the opportunity to qualify to represent Singapore."

Ng, who set up the association last November, added that the selection process has been approved by national sports agency Sport Singa-



Teams from China and Korea competing in League of Legends during the e-sports demonstration event at last year's Asian Games in Jakarta. ST FILE PHOTO

pore and the Singapore National Olympic Council (SNOC).

E-sports is making its inaugural appearance as a medal event at the biennial SEA Games. It was a demonstration sport at last August's Asian Games in Indonesia.

Registration for the March qualifier is now open, and closes on Feb 28. All participants must be at least 18 years old.

Individuals and teams who have finished third or higher at the regional level can apply to the association to receive a bye into May's final as one of four seeds, with more importance attached to results from

world finals or tournaments on the professional circuits of the respective game titles.

The seeded teams for the selection finals will be announced on March 1. The association is also expected to nominate a head coach candidate to the SNOC.

The response from leading teams in the local scene has been largely positive.

"We are happy to see that the door has been opened for both team-based players and individual players and, more importantly, we are confident that the selection format is fair," said Team Flash chief

executive officer Terence Ting.

The organisation's Fifa Online team were crowned Asian champions for the second consecutive year in November, winning US\$100,000 (S\$134,900) in prize money.

However, Fifa is not among the titles on the SEA Games slate.

Ting declined to reveal which titles Flash have their eyes on at this point, but said they are aiming for a podium spot at the SEA Games.

Fellow local e-sports organisation Resurgence, who have 12 teams over nine games on their roster, are expected to field teams for three of the SEA Games titles.

It had 17 championship wins and 36 podium finishes last year.

"The SEA Games is a huge opportunity for us to change mindsets in Singapore about e-sports and I am very excited about the possibilities that it can bring," said Resurgence owner Jayf Soh.

"We respect what the NSA (national sports association) has said about the selection process and we will support them."

More information can be found at the Singapore Esports Association's Facebook page.

lesterw@sph.com.sg

Lefty shoots 68 on 30th Phoenix start

LOS ANGELES • As a three-time winner of the Phoenix Open and having attended nearby Arizona State University on a golf scholarship, Phil Mickelson has a real connection with the "special place".

And, after making a record 30th start in the event and going on to shoot a three-under 68 on Thursday, four strokes behind first-round joint-leader and fellow American Justin Thomas, five-time Major winner felt he had "an okay start" at an event he last won in 2013.

Mickelson, 48, who is seeking his 500th official cut on the PGA Tour and a record fourth triumph at TPC Scottsdale, said: "I shot three under and to birdie the last feels good too, so it was a good way to finish."

"The time has really flown by... 30 years, gosh."

"I remember when I was in college, it doesn't seem that long ago that I was playing in my first Phoenix Open."

"What a great feeling I experienced with the crowd and the many memories that I've had here."

The tournament is the only event on the Tour's West Coast swing that does not take place in California and, like the left-handed Mickel-

son, Thomas has his eye set on beating a field featuring 10 of the top-30 players in the world, after ending tied for 17th last year and twice missing the cut.

The 2017 PGA Championship winner drained four straight birdies to post a 64 to finish in a tie with compatriots Rickie Fowler and Harold Varner.

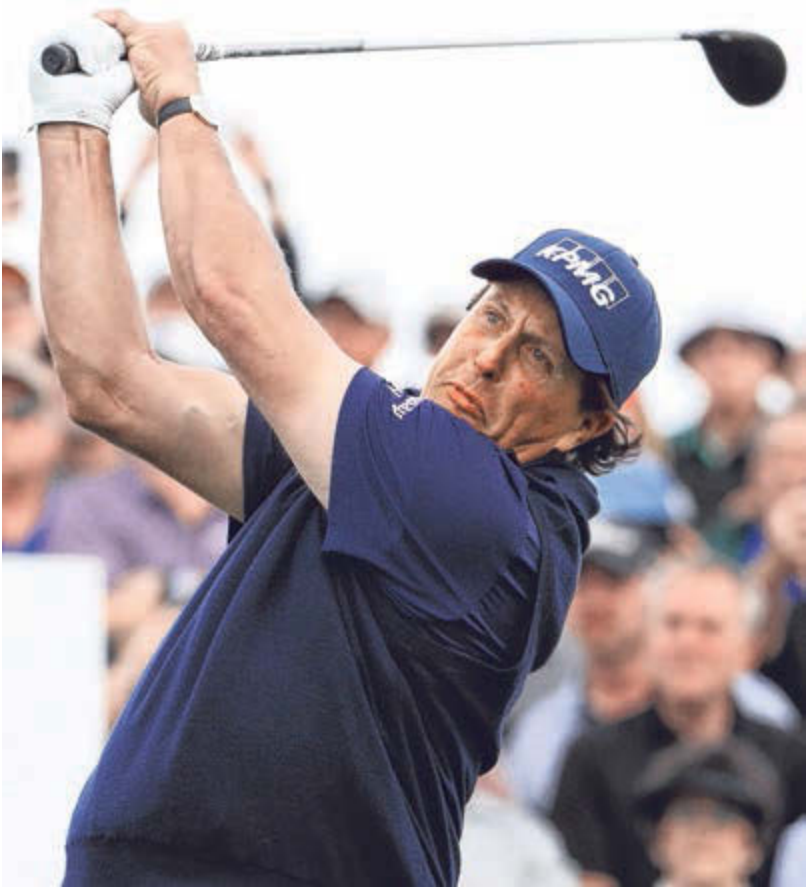
Thomas also had six birdies in seven holes, although he admitted his performance was harder than it looked as "it was very, very hard to get the balls close to the pin early in the round".

The world No. 4, who is the only top-five golfer not playing in this week's Saudi Invitational, added: "But I just continued to try to stay patient and was driving it well to where I had wedges and I made some very low-stress birdies."

"I was very in control of everything tee to green."

"I didn't necessarily get off to the greatest start score-wise, but felt I was playing well."

Thrice Major runner-up Fowler eagled the par-five 13th as part of a four-under score for his first eight holes, while Varner had three birdies in his final six holes.



Phil Mickelson is seeking his 500th official cut on the PGA Tour and a record fourth triumph at TPC Scottsdale. PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

American J.T. Poston and Scotland's Martin Laird are both one shot back after shooting 65s.

The organisers have put Mickelson, Japan's Hideki Matsuyama, who has prevailed in a play-off in two of the past three years, and defending champion Gary Woodland

together for the first two rounds as the trio have won the event a combined half-dozen times.

Matsuyama shot a 68 and American Woodland is also on three under, aided by a burst of three straight birdies on the back nine. AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, REUTERS

Xi reiterates tough stand on drug cheats



BEIJING • Chinese President Xi Jinping (left) has declared that he "hates" doping, laying out a tough stance against cheating at the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics.

Doping has overshadowed the Games in recent years, with Russia's Olympic committee barred

from last year's Pyeongchang Games because of performance-enhancing drugs.

China's sporting record in the past decade has also been tainted by doping, with some athletes stripped of Olympic medals.

But Mr Xi has put his foot down, insisting he "would prefer to have clean Chinese athletes than a gold medal, or any medal at all".

After meeting International Olympic Committee president Thomas Bach in Beijing on Thursday, he said he personally objected

to doping and reiterated that China had "a clear and very strong policy" on the use of drugs in sport.

According to Xinhua news agency, Chinese athletes who use performance-enhancing drugs will receive criminal punishments and jail terms as of this year.

In 2017, a Chinese doctor told German media that there had been a systematic doping programme in the country during the 1980s and 1990s across a range of sports.

Earlier this week, Bach visited the Beijing 2022 facilities, includ-

ing the downhill skiing competition site, and said progress on venue construction was "very impressive".

He added: "For every venue we have visited here, we could see what the use for it would be after the Olympic Games so that the Chinese people can then really enjoy winter sports."

Beijing hosted the 2008 Olympics, and will be the first city to have staged both a Summer and Winter Games.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Next 48 Hours

TODAY

BASKETBALL

ABL Mono Vampire v Zhuhai (StarHub Ch201, 4pm), HK Eastern v Macau Black Bears (Ch202, 8pm).

FOOTBALL

English Premier League Tottenham v Newcastle (8.30pm), Chelsea v Huddersfield (11pm), Cardiff v Bournemouth (tomorrow, 1.30am) – Singtel TV Ch102 & StarHub Ch227, Burnley v Southampton (Ch103 & Ch228), Brighton v Watford (Ch104 & Ch229), Palace v Fulham (Ch105 & Ch230), Everton v Wolves (Ch106 & Ch 231) – 10.50pm.

Spanish LaLiga Levante v Getafe (7.55pm), Sociedad v Bilbao (11.10pm), Barcelona v Valencia (tomorrow, 1.25am), Celta v Sevilla (tomorrow, 3.40am) – StarHub Ch213.

GOLF

European Tour Saudi International: Day 3 (StarHub Ch204, 5.30pm).

RUGBY

World Sevens, Sydney Pool matches (StarHub Ch202, 6.30am, 11.45am & 3.15pm).

TOMORROW

BASKETBALL

ABL S'pore Slingsers v CLS Knights (OCBC Arena, StarHub Ch201, 4pm), Alab Pilipinas v Saigon Heat (Ch202, 7pm).

CRICKET

5th & final ODI NZ v India (Singtel TV Ch123 & StarHub Ch236, 10am).

FOOTBALL

English Premier League Leicester v Man United (10.05pm), Man City v Arsenal (Monday, 12.30am) – Singtel TV Ch102 & StarHub Ch227.

Spanish LaLiga Villarreal v Espanyol (6.55pm), Betis v Atletico Madrid (11.10pm), Eibar v Girona (Monday, 1.25am), Real Madrid v Alaves (Monday, 3.45am) – StarHub Ch213.

GOLF

European Tour Saudi International: Day 4 (StarHub Ch204, 5.30pm).

MIXED MARTIAL ARTS

UFC Fight Night Assuncao v Moraes 2 (Singtel TV Ch114 & StarHub Ch208, 9am).

RUGBY

World Sevens, Sydney Q-finals (7.30am), s-finals (11am) & finals (4pm) – StarHub Ch202.

For latest updates, check the on-screen TV guide.

Saturday's Hong Kong (Sha Tin) form analysis

SPEEDY DRAGON FOR HAT-TRICK

RACE 1 (1,000M)

10 Ruminare has been a disappointment throughout his Hong Kong career. That said, he now gets right down in the weights and, if he can muster the speed to get somewhere near the pace-setters, he could finally break through for a first win. **7 Happy Sound** won over this course and distance earlier this season, but he was pretty flat when trying it again in December. His last two efforts were just fair, but back to this trip, he's not without claims. **3 District Express** drops sharply in trip. It might just be the making of him and he's capable of progressing off last-start third. **5 Massive Move** has performed well over this trip and looks well-placed.

RACE 2 (1,800M)

3 Lucky Shiny Day ran well on dirt a couple of times up in Class 4, including once behind potential Dubai World Cup aspirant Elusive State in July. He now gets onto the likely preferred surface for the first time in Class 5, with Joao Moreira engaged, and it does appear as though this is his best chance yet to score a first win. **11 Corre Rapido** is a frustrating horse to follow. After 19 winless starts, it's hard to believe he was sent out a 2-1 favourite on debut ahead of a horse that's now become a Class 2 mainstay, Bravo Watchman. Still, if ever a win is going to come, it's likely to be on dirt over a mile or 1,800m. This might be his time to shine. **8 Court Ruler** – not to be confused with the 2009 Queensland Derby winner – showed a first sign of life last time out. The dirt looks a good move and he's not without a hope. **13 Little Fantasy** is racing well enough to win with no weight.

RACE 3 (1,000M)

7 Shining Ace, trained by John Size, steps out for the first time. A Size first-starter should always be respected and he's trialled well enough to suggest he can show up at start No.1. **2 Meridian Genius** had a torrid passage on debut, but his last outing suggests that the natural ability exists for him to be able to break through quickly. **6 Lucky Thought** should excel over further, but he looks to have been well-prepared for his initial outing and is in contention. **4 Brilliant** may be overlooked by the market but his quiet trial in preparation for this suggested he was one to watch first time out.

RACE 4 (1,200M)

4 Speedy Dragon has put two wins together in his last two starts. It remains to be seen how much higher he can go but he has struck another suitable race and can't be completely dismissed. **9 Wonder Express** has trialled nicely ahead of his debut. The eye-catching gelding looks a ready-made racehorse and can win on debut. **2 Genealeys Generals** won narrowly on debut when drawn well over the straight 1,000m. He has the same gate but it becomes a nasty draw over the 1,200m. Still, he appears capable of backing it up. **8 Loriz** isn't without claims at start one.

RACE 5 (1,400M)

10 Hurricane Hunter won nicely in December before having absolutely no luck under Zac Purton last time out. If he has just an ounce of luck in this spot, he's the one to beat. **9 Fun Times** has improved with ev-

ery start. His last effort behind Picken was good. Even though 1,600m would be better for him, he's a contender in this spot.

1 Chairman Lo has finished second in his last two starts. He's gone up five points, so essentially a win, for those placings. Still, he's likely to be somewhere around the mark again.

6 Family Leader can finish in the placings.

RACE 6 (1,650M)

11 Alcazar returns to the dirt but steps up to the 1,650m for the first time, which looks a smart move. If there is a solid speed up front, he should be able to enjoy a nice trail and, if he can settle, he can finish off over the top.

8 Radiant Bunny is amazingly still a Hong Kong maiden after 23 starts. He feels like he's been around forever, but there's enough in his recent form to suggest he could get into the finish.

3 Good Fit is racing well and always deserves respect in these sorts of races.

9 Art Of Raw is finding form again and could run another nice race without surprising.

RACE 7 (1,200M)

3 Tornado Twist has been very impressive in his last two starts, scoring two big wins. There's no reason he can't make it three on the trot, given he looks to still have points in hand. **7 Mighty Maverick** ran poorly last time out when unable to adopt a forward position. If he can end up near the speed, he's the main threat to the favourite.

8 Diamond Rhyme drops back to 1,200m, but he also gets blinkers for the first time and he looks interesting.



10 Sonic Fighter pulled up with an irregular heart rhythm last time out. He's competitive if he can return to his best.

RACE 8 (1,650M)

4 Top Laurels stepped out on the dirt for the first time last time out. He couldn't find a clear passage through but he fought back strongly late. He has been racing well this season and can score a second Hong Kong win with some luck.

10 Unicorn Jewellery failed to hit the board in two course-and-distance attempts, both off a similar mark. He is racing well though and looks a chance in this spot.

6 Tang Fleming is an outside hope.

RACE 9 (1,800M)

2 Marzouq disappointed fresh over 1,400m. However, he didn't have the clearest of runs and ended up in an awkward position before making steady late ground. Stepping up to this trip should suit and he can figure despite the wide gate.

11 Happy Sebring ran well in his first course-and-distance start last time out. He deserves respect in this spot.

3 Rule Three is racing honestly and can't be ruled out.

1 Classic Beauty drops to Class 3

for the first time. The former London Icon gets blinkers for the first time and creates interest.

RACE 10 (1,600M)

11 Enrichment has run well in two Hong Kong starts, both well-spaced. The Size-trained galloper, who was Group 2-placed in Australia when named Belfast, finally gets stable rider Joao Moreira aboard and looks set to put his best foot forward as he aims towards next month's BMW Hong Kong Derby.

7 Circuit Number Two has been off the scene since October, having had some minor issues after a last-start course-and-distance third. He is another who looks a Derby horse in the making, having been a stablemate of Enrichment's when both were in Australia. He's worth including.

6 Good Standing is not on the Derby path and missed his opportunity at the classic last year. He's had a chequered Hong Kong career, but will get into the finish one of these days. **8 Epic**, formerly known as Merlin Magic, can run a bold race on his Hong Kong debut.

• Comments courtesy of The Hong Kong Jockey Club

SATURDAY'S HONG KONG (SHA TIN) RACE CARD

RACE 1

TIME : 1:00

No.	Horse Name	Trainer	Jockey	wt(lb)	Bar
1	BLACK TECH	CW CHANG	CWONG	133	5
2	WINNING CIRCLE	JMOORE	CMURRAY	132	10
3	DISTRICT EXPRESS	P FYU	CSCHOFIELD	130	8
4	BEST RUNNER	YS TSUI	MLYUNG	129	9
5	MASSIVE MOVE	LHO	HTMO	127	1
6	MONEY MARSHAL	PO'SULLIVAN	KTEETAN	127	6
7	HAPPY SOUND	CFOWNES	MCHADWICK	124	7
8	WHISTLE UP	LHO	THSO	120	4
9	PADDINGTON	WY SO	JMOORE	116	2
10	RUMINARE	RGBISON	DWHYTE	116	2

RACE 2

TIME : 1:30

No.	Horse Name	Trainer	Jockey	wt(lb)	Bar
1	JIN JIN KING	D JHALL	MFPOON	133	4
2	GORGEOUS AGAIN	CS SHUM	ZPURTON	132	5
3	LUCKY SHINY DAY	JMOORE	JMOORE	132	3
4	UNOYABLE SUCCESS	CW CHANG	NCALLAN	129	1
5	MASTER BERNINI	DEFERRARIS	CWONG	128	6
6	PENANCE	D JHALL	ASANNA	128	10
7	TRAVEL AMBASSADOR	RGBISON	CSCHOFIELD	127	1
8	COURT RULER	WY SO	HTMO	126	13
9	MI BLANCO	PO'SULLIVAN	URISPOLI	124	9
10	DRAGON WARRIOR	KH TING	DWHYTE	121	2
11	CORRE RAPIDO	ABADEL	ABADEL	118	3
12	SWEET BEE	CFOWNES	MCHADWICK	117	12
13	LITTLE FANTASY	K LMAN	KTEETAN	113	7

RACE 3

TIME : 2:00

No.	Horse Name	Trainer	Jockey	wt(lb)	Bar
1	LOOK ERAS	YS TSUI	HNWONG	133	9
2	MERIDIAN GENIUS	AT MILLARD	G VAN NIEKERK	130	3
3	LIGHTNING STEED	CFOWNES	ZPURTON	128	12
4	BRIILLANT	KW LUI	MCHADWICK	127	11
5	IRON KING	CHYIP	URISPOLI	127	1
6	LUCKY THOUGHT	CS SHUM	KTEETAN	127	2

CLASS 5 TURF - 1000m

Stakes: HK\$690,000

No.	Horse Name	Trainer	Jockey	wt(lb)	Bar
7	SHINING ACE	JSIZE	JMOORE	127	7
8	SIMPLE ELEGANT	PFYU	MLYUNG	127	4
9	VIGOROUS SPIRIT	K LMAN	ASANNA	127	1
10	WHISKY KNIGHT	CMURRAY	NCALLAN	125	6
11	BLAZING PARTNERS	DEFERRARIS	DWHYTE	124	10
12	BELLA BABY	WY SO	CWONG	124	10
13	MULTIMAX	AS CRUZ	THSO	120	14
14	SUNSHINE UNIVERSE	RGBISON	THSO	116	13

RACE 4

TIME : 2:30

No.	Horse Name	Trainer	Jockey	wt(lb)	Bar
1	MULTIMILLION	AS CRUZ	DWHYTE	133	1
2	GLENEALY GENERALS	CHYIP	ZPURTON	130	12
3	MEDIC DRAGON	PO'SULLIVAN	THSO	130	5
4	SPEEDY DRAGON	RGBISON	MFPOON	127	8
5	BLOOMING SPIRIT	FCLOR	G VAN NIEKERK	125	4
6	COURAGEOUS DRAGON	WY SO	K LMAN	125	11
7	HAPPY BOYBOY	C LLEUNG	CSCHOFIELD	125	3
8	LORIZ	PFYU	CSCHOFIELD	125	3
9	WONDER EXPRESS	CS SHUM	KTEETAN	125	7
10	YICHUN BLITZ	RGBISON	MCHADWICK	124	9
11	DORROR	JSIZE	JMOORE	123	10
12	BINGO	JMOORE	CWONG	120	2

RACE 5

TIME : 3:00

No.	Horse Name	Trainer	Jockey	wt(lb)	Bar
1	CHAIRMAN LO	JSIZE	JMOORE	133	8
2	HEALTHY TREASURE	K LMAN	NCALLAN	133	3
3	RULETHEROST	DORROR	CMURRAY	128	7
4	ABOVE	JMOORE	CMURRAY	128	7
5	GOLDEN MISSION	RGBISON	MCHADWICK	128	14
6	FAMILY LEADER	CFOWNES	KTEETAN	127	2
7	GOOD RUNNERS WAY	CS SHUM	CMURRAY	126	10
8	FINE WITH ME	KH TING	HNWONG	124	13
9	RUN TIMES	AT MILLARD	URISPOLI	124	5
10	HURRICANE HUNTER	ZPURTON	CMURRAY	124	10
11	KYANG BRILLIANCE	TP YUNG	MLYUNG	121	12
12	MEGATON	PFYU	MFPOON	120	11
13	FOX CHEUNGHER	KW LUI	DWHYTE	119	6
14	THE SYLPH	DEFERRARIS	ABADEL	117	9

CLASS 4 TURF - 1000m

Stakes: HK\$920,000

No.	Horse Name	Trainer	Jockey	wt(lb)	Bar
7	SHINING ACE	JSIZE	JMOORE	127	7
8	SIMPLE ELEGANT	PFYU	MLYUNG	127	4
9	VIGOROUS SPIRIT	K LMAN	ASANNA	127	1
10	WHISKY KNIGHT	CMURRAY	NCALLAN	125	6
11	BLAZING PARTNERS	DEFERRARIS	DWHYTE	124	10
12	BELLA BABY	WY SO	CWONG	124	10
13	MULTIMAX	AS CRUZ	THSO	120	14
14	SUNSHINE UNIVERSE	RGBISON	THSO	116	13

CLASS 5 AWT - 1800m

Stakes: HK\$690,000

No.	Horse Name	Trainer	Jockey	wt(lb)	Bar
1	JIN JIN KING	D JHALL	MFPOON	133	4
2	GORGEOUS AGAIN	CS SHUM	ZPURTON	132	5
3	LUCKY SHINY DAY	JMOORE	JMOORE	132	3
4	UNOYABLE SUCCESS	CW CHANG	NCALLAN	129	1
5	MASTER BERNINI	DEFERRARIS	CWONG	128	6
6	PENANCE	D JHALL	ASANNA	128	10
7	TRAVEL AMBASSADOR	RGBISON	CSCHOFIELD	127	1
8	COURT RULER	WY SO	HTMO	126	13
9	MI BLANCO	PO'SULLIVAN	URISPOLI	124	9
10	DRAGON WARRIOR	KH TING	DWHYTE	121	2
11	CORRE RAPIDO	ABADEL	ABADEL	118	3
12	SWEET BEE	CFOWNES	MCHADWICK	117	12
13	LITTLE FANTASY	K LMAN	KTEETAN	113	7

CLASS 4 TURF - 1400m

Stakes: HK\$920,000

No.	Horse Name	Trainer	Jockey	wt(lb)	Bar
1	LOOK ERAS	YS TSUI	HNWONG	133	9
2	MERIDIAN GENIUS	AT MILLARD	G VAN NIEKERK	130	3
3	LIGHTNING STEED	CFOWNES	ZPURTON	128	12
4	BRIILLANT	KW LUI	MCHADWICK	127	11
5	IRON KING	CHYIP	URISPOLI	127	1
6	LUCKY THOUGHT	CS SHUM	KTEETAN	127	2

CLASS 5 TURF - 1000m

Stakes: HK\$690,000

No.	Horse Name	Trainer	Jockey	wt(lb)	Bar
7	SHINING ACE	JSIZE	JMOORE	127	7
8	SIMPLE ELEGANT	PFYU	MLYUNG	127	4
9	VIGOROUS SPIRIT	K LMAN	ASANNA	127	1
10	WHISKY KNIGHT	CMURRAY	NCALLAN	125	6
11	BLAZING PARTNERS	DEFERRARIS	DWHYTE	124	10
12	BELLA BABY	WY SO	CWONG	124	10
13	MULTIMAX	AS CRUZ	THSO	120	14
14	SUNSHINE UNIVERSE	RGBISON	THSO	116	13

CLASS 5 AWT - 1800m

Stakes: HK\$690,000

No.	Horse Name	Trainer	Jockey	wt(lb)	Bar
1	JIN JIN KING	D JHALL	MFPOON	133	4
2	GORGEOUS AGAIN	CS SHUM	ZPURTON	132	5
3	LUCKY SHINY DAY	JMOORE	JMOORE	132	3
4	UNOYABLE SUCCESS	CW CHANG	NCALLAN	129	1
5	MASTER BERNINI	DEFERRARIS	CWONG	128	6
6	PENANCE	D JHALL	ASANNA	128	10
7	TRAVEL AMBASSADOR	RGBISON	CSCHOFIELD	127	1
8	COURT RULER	WY SO	HTMO	126	13
9	MI BLANCO	PO'SULLIVAN	URISPOLI	124	9
10	DRAGON WARRIOR	KH TING	DWHYTE	121	2
11	CORRE RAPIDO	ABADEL	ABADEL	118	3
12	SWEET BEE	CFOWNES	MCHADWICK	117	12
13	LITTLE FANTASY	K LMAN	KTEETAN	113	7

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Stakes: HK\$920,000

No.	Horse Name	Trainer	Jockey	wt(lb)	Bar
1	LOOK ERAS	YS TSUI	HNWONG	133	9
2	MERIDIAN GENIUS	AT MILLARD	G VAN NIEKERK	130	3
3	LIGHTNING STEED	CFOWNES	ZPURTON	128	12
4	BRIILLANT	KW LUI	MCHADWICK	127	11
5	IRON KING	CHYIP	URISPOLI	127	1
6	LUCKY THOUGHT	CS SHUM	KTEETAN	127	2

CLASS 5 TURF - 1000m

Stakes: HK\$690,000

No.	Horse Name	Trainer	Jockey	wt(lb)	Bar
7	SHINING ACE	JSIZE	JMOORE	127	7
8	SIMPLE ELEGANT	PFYU	MLYUNG	127	4
9	VIGOROUS SPIRIT	K LMAN	ASANNA	127	1
10	WHISKY KNIGHT	CMURRAY	NCALLAN	125	6
11	BLAZING PARTNERS	DEFERRARIS	DWHYTE	124	10
12	BELLA BABY	WY SO	CWONG	124	10
13	MULTIMAX	AS CRUZ	THSO	120	14
14	SUNSHINE UNIVERSE	RGBISON	THSO	116	13

CLASS 5 AWT - 1800m

Stakes: HK\$690,000

No.	Horse Name	Trainer	Jockey	wt(lb)	Bar
1	JIN JIN KING	D JHALL	MFPOON	133	4
2	GORGEOUS AGAIN	CS SHUM	ZPURTON	132	5
3	LUCKY SHINY DAY	JMOORE	JMOORE	132	3
4	UNOYABLE SUCCESS	CW CHANG	NCALLAN	129	1
5	MASTER BERNINI	DEFERRARIS	CWONG	128	6
6	PENANCE	D JHALL	ASANNA	128	10
7	TRAVEL AMBASSADOR	RGBISON	CSCHOFIELD	127	1
8	COURT RULER	WY SO	HTMO	126	13
9	MI BLANCO	PO'SULLIVAN	URISPOLI	124	9
10	DRAGON WARRIOR	KH TING	DWHYTE	121	2
11	CORRE RAPIDO	ABADEL	ABADEL	118	3
12	SWEET BEE	CFOWNES	MCHADWICK	117	12
13	LITTLE FANTASY	K LMAN	KTEETAN	113	7



DUO OBLIGE FIRST-UP

US-breds Winning Hobby, Siam MP romp home in the two Restricted Maiden races

Tan Thean Loon

Just last Tuesday week, Siam MP and Winning Hobby caught the eye by finishing first and second respectively in a barrier trial at Kranji.

The two American-bred newcomers were obviously the horses to follow. With luck, they found themselves in different races in the two \$75,000 Restricted Maiden events over 1,200m on turf and both romped home in style with identical No. 14 saddle-cloth number.

Being three-year-old Northern Hemisphere-bred horses, the pair carried 3.5kg lighter than their Southern Hemisphere equine counterparts, which possibly contributed partly to their successes.

The three to strike was Winning Hobby, who cost only US\$12,000

(S\$16,000) as a yearling, while Siam MP was a US\$50,000 purchase as a two-year-old.

Trained by C.T. Kuah and ridden by multiple-champion Malaysian jockey Azhar Ismail, Winning Hobby sat handily in fourth spot, as debut runner-up Super Smart led.

Azhar drove Winning Hobby up turning for home and got the measure of the leader in the final 200m to win comfortably by 2¼ lengths in a smart 1min 10.32sec. He paid \$22 as the second favourite.

Both Kuah and Azhar reckoned that Winning Hobby was still green and therefore has plenty of room for improvement.

“He’s a nice horse. He was only 90 (per cent). He will improve with racing. I think he has a lot of ability and I think he will be better over 1,400m,” said Kuah.

The Michael Clements-trained Siam MP lined up two races later in last night’s fourth event and went off as the \$10 favourite. It was rightly so, with Winning Hobby having franked the trial form.

Siam MP played up a bit at the parade ring and was the last horse to go out to the barrier. But he was the first to come home in a race that turned out to be a two-horse affair.

Siam MP disputed the lead with the Ricardo Le Grange-trained \$20 second favourite Toosbies, who held a slim advantage from the bend. For a moment in the straight, Siam MP’s supporters must have been biting their fingers as the horse was one-paced.

But once jockey Glen Boss said “go” at the 300m mark, his mount woke up from his slumber to lengthen stylishly. Like Winning Hobby, the bay gelding also won by 2¼ lengths but his winning time was slower, 1:11.21.

Clements was pleased that stablemates The Iceman, also a newbie,

and Magnum Force, ran well to finish third and fourth respectively.

The lanky trainer said Siam MP was pretty full of himself over the last three to four weeks with the work he has had. He was not unduly worried with his pre-race “playful” and “wild” manners.

“I don’t think he’s being nasty. He’s just feeling great and wants to have a bit of a play. But, at times, this can be a bit dangerous,” said the Zimbabwean-born trainer. “But I think with racing and more work, he’s going to settle down.”

Clements felt the wide barrier was not much of a problem as he knew his charge possesses speed. But he admitted he had some anxious moments in the straight.

“At the 300m mark, it looked like he wasn’t finding. But, you know, Glen was patient and got to work on him and he responded very well. Look, what he has shown us, he looks like a smart horse,” he said.

loon@sph.com.sg

Friday’s South Africa results

RACE 1

1st 8 Great Achievement (\$167-\$33)
2nd 9 Mendocino (\$5.10)
3rd 11 Scarborough Fair (\$7)
4th 7 Flame Up
Forecast \$60
Place Forecast (8-9) \$20, (8-11) \$34, (9-11) \$6
Tierce No winner (\$4,680 carried forward)
Trio \$146
Quartet No winner (\$588 carried forward)
Scratchings: 3 Comet Path

RACE 2

1st 1 All The Sevens (\$39-\$12)
2nd 13 Melandia (\$7)
3rd 11 Desert Wanderer (\$8)
4th 6 Zabivaka
Forecast \$23
Place Forecast (1-13) \$11, (1-11) \$19, (11-13) \$9
Tierce \$477
Trio \$64
Quartet No winner (\$1,048 carried forward)
Scratchings: 3 Master Newton, 5 Away Game, 9 Dancing In Seattle

RACE 3

1st 2 Wood For The Trees (\$57-\$13)
2nd 5 Conquering King (\$6)
3rd 7 Hippie Trail (\$6)
4th 1 Philander
Forecast \$45
Place Forecast (2-5) \$13, (2-7) \$7, (5-7) \$4
Tierce \$331
Trio \$25
Quartet \$1217
Scratchings: 8 Settlement Day, 10 Mystic Journey, 11 Tsitsikamma Star

RACE 4

1st 4 Via Sacra (\$62-\$11)
2nd 5 Perfect Timing (\$7)
3rd 2 Pepper Oak (\$10)
4th 3 Quick Glimpse
Forecast \$66
Place Forecast (4-5) \$20, (2-4)

\$42, (2-5) \$13
Tierce \$762
Trio \$310
Quartet No winner (\$556 carried forward)
RACE 5
1st 7 March Music (\$9-\$6)
2nd 2 Falcon Rock (\$10)
3rd 5 Tyrian (No 3rd dividend)
4th 6 Adalfieri
Forecast \$9
Place Forecast (Refund)
Tierce \$44
Trio \$11
Quartet \$117
Scratchings: 4 Royal Fort

RACE 6

1st 9 Masterful (\$67-\$17)
2nd 7 Lets Play Ball (\$27)
3rd 5 African Messiah (\$8)
4th 10 Chestnut Wild
Forecast \$223
Place Forecast (7-9) \$49, (5-9) \$9, (5-7) \$20
Tierce \$2,115
Trio \$135
Quartet No winner (\$532 carried forward)

RACE 7

1st 1 Star Chestnut (\$14-\$7)
2nd 4 Laws Of Succession (\$8)
3rd 5 Streak Of Silver (\$16)
4th 2 Union Jack
Forecast \$16
Place Forecast (1-4) \$7, (1-5) \$14, (4-5) \$13
Tierce \$170
Trio \$51
Quartet \$998
RACE 8
1st 10 Street Gaze (\$16-\$7)
2nd 11 Inga (\$71)
3rd 12 Stream Of Kindness (\$21)
4th 6 Keep The Faith
Forecast \$193
Place Forecast (10-11) \$53, (10-12) \$22, (11-12) \$226
Tierce \$2,868
Trio \$486
Quartet No winner (\$350 carried forward to today’s SA meeting)

FRIDAY’S SINGAPORE (SHORT COURSE A/POLYTRACK) RESULTS

RACE 1

10 CROWN DELIGHT 52 (22-8)
7 KEEP WINNING 56.5 (23-9)
9 MA YOU CAI 53.5 (197-40)
3 THE ONE 59 c 55 (73-17)
11 HEPHAESTUS 50 (107-22)
2 GALWAY GIRL 59 c 58 (50-11)
4 YULONG HOLY FLYING 59 c 57 (18-9)
6 PHUKET 58 (468-93)
5 DANGER ZONE 58.5 (53-16)
1 BOUNCEBACK ABILITY 59 (72-19)
8 MONGOLIAN CHIEF 54.5 (38-12)

Winning stable: DDD. **Trainer:** KY Young. **Time:** 1min 49.26sec (Going: good). **Forecast:** \$26. **Tierce:** \$1143. **Quartet:** No winner (\$1326 jackpot carried forward to next race). **P Forecast:** \$10 (10-7), \$48 (7-9), \$67 (10-9). **Trio:** \$312.

RACE 2

14 WINNING HOBBY 53.5 (22-7)
11 SUPER SMART 57 (25-7)
2 HUGO 57 (13-6)
4 DIAMOND KING 57 c 56 (60-18)
3 BUSHIDO 53.5 (153-27)
1 THE NUTTER 57 (41-15)
6 ARCHIE 57 (163-39)
12 VICTORIA PERFETTA 57 (179-47)
10 MY MIRACLE 57 c 56 (536-108)
3 QIX COMMANDER 57 (56-16)
9 MAESTRO 57 (555-93)
8 FIREWORKS 57 (999-175)
7 D’GREAT JOURNEY 57 (199-35)
5 BROADWAY SUCCESS 57 (285-49)

Winning stable: Winning Hobby. **Trainer:** CT Kuah. **Time:** 1min 10.32sec (good). **Forecast:** \$41. **Tierce:** \$185. **Quartet:** \$1309. **P Forecast:** \$12 (14-11), \$6 (11-2), \$6 (14-2). **Trio:** \$27.

RACE 3

4 SUPERSONICSURPRISE 58 (23-8)
5 UNCLE LUCKY 58 c 57 (29-10)
8 RICH FORTUNE 56.5 (146-32)
1 LUCKY SIX 58 (17-6)
7 AUSPICIOUS ACE 56.5 (62-18)
11 GOLDEN COIN 55 (405-93)
6 D’GREAT KANGAROO 57 (24-12)
9 GOLDEN SPARK 56.5 (140-37)
3 THE GOLDEN GOAT 58 c 54 (38-12)
2 SUPER EMPEROR 58 (49-15)

C51700m

CC Wong* (5) 11 10 1 (495) 0.5
N Jugall (7) 6 2 (457) 0.5
I Azhar (1) 5 7 3 (492) Ns
R Iskandar* (8) 4 1 4 (549) Ns
I Saifudin (11) 8 8 5 (453) 3
T See (4) 3 3 6 (477) Shd
I Amirul* (9) 1 2 7 (436) 0.5
D Moor (2) 7 9 8 (456) 2.75
M Lerner (6) 6 4 9 (472) 2.5
M Zaki (10) 2 5 10 (490) 4.25
B Thompson (3) 10 11 (453) Dist

RM DI (SC) 1200m

I Azhar (4) 4 3 1 (489) -
B Woodworth (13) 1 1 2 (502) 2.25
B Thompson (7) 6 6 3 (488) 0.75
TH Koh (10) 11 10 3 (550) Hd
D Moor (8) 12 12 5 (506) 0.75
M Rodd (11) 8 8 6 (576) 0.5
B Vorster (14) 14 11 7 (440) 0.75
S John (14) 14 11 7 (440) 0.75
S Noh (12) 10 9 9 (468) 0.75
N Jugall (3) 3 2 10 (514) 1.25
S John (9) 13 14 11 (476) 1.5
I Saifudin (2) 9 10 12 (497) 0.75
M Lerner (10) 11 13 13 (505) 8.75
G Boss (5) 2 4 14 (499) 4.25

KS-D1100m

N Jugall (4) 5 3 1 (508) -
TH Koh (5) 1 1 2 (472) 0.5
S John (10) 11 10 3 (550) Hd
J Powell (7) 2 2 4 (518) 0.5
B Thompson (8) 7 8 5 (480) 2.75
K A’isshuairi (9) 9 11 6 (467) 0.5
M Lerner (6) 4 7 (534) 0.5
CC Wong* (12) 6 7 8 (489) Hd
A Syahir* (3) 5 9 (511) Shd
V Duric (3) 10 6 10 (548) 1.75

10 BRILLIANT ONE 55 (312-68)

RED RIDING WOOD 55 c 51 (217-45)

Winning stable: KKT Racing. **Trainer:** HW Tan. **Time:** 1min 6.78sec (good). **Forecast:** \$58. **Tierce:** \$2487. **Quartet:** No winner (\$13646 carried forward). **P Forecast:** \$23 (4-5), \$87 (5-8), \$55 (4-8). **Trio:** \$666.

RACE 4

14 SIAM MP 53.5 (10-510)
1 TOOSBIES 57 (20-7)
11 THE ICEMAN 57 (125-26)
13 MAGNUM FORCE 53.5 (300-46)
9 LEGEND ROCKS 57 (346-68)
4 AXEL 57 c 56 (70-20)
8 FAVOURITISM 57 c 56 (122-23)
12 MAMAMIA MAMAMIA 55.5 (84-18)
6 GOLD KINGDOM 57 (387-65)
7 D’GREAT SUN 57 c 56 (283-52)
3 SALAMENCE 54 c 55 (999-148)
2 ANOTHER SHOW 57 (196-34)
10 MONTANT 57 (392-59)
5 GRIFF KILLING 57 (159-31)

Winning stable: Pupeth Racing. **Trainer:** M Clements. **Time:** 1min 11.25sec (good). **Forecast:** \$10. **Tierce:** \$112. **Quartet:** \$3951. **P Forecast:** \$6 (14-1), \$21 (1-11), \$17 (14-11). **Trio:** \$40. **Course scratchings:** 15 Lady Boss.

RACE 5

4 ARARAT LADY 55.5 (7-510)
5 GRAND KOONTA 55.5 (26-6)
10 BUKLAN 52.5 (75-14)
1 BEST WISHES 57 (34-9)
6 OL MATE BUZZER 55.5 c 54.5 (61-16)
9 SATTELITE MASTER 53 (129-23)
3 SATTELITE KINGDOM 56 (258-35)
7 MISS MICHELLE 54 c 53.5 (999-148)
8 CERDAN 54 (199-36)
11 FEROCIOUS 50 c 51 (762-102)
2 AUTUMN CENTURY 56 (129-26)

Winning stable: Jass. **Trainer:** C Brown. **Time:** 1min 5.99sec (good). **Forecast:** \$10. **Tierce:** \$144. **Quartet:** \$336. **P Forecast:** \$4 (4-5), \$19 (5-10), \$8 (4-10). **Trio:** \$50.

RACE 6

5 RACING TALENT 57 c 56 (128-32)
6 SUCCESS CROMER 57 c 56 (43-14)
4 PLUCKY LAD 57 c 56 (9-510)
1 CLARTON STAR 57 c 56 (105-27)

B Woodworth (2) 8 9 11 (473) Nk

M Nizar* (1) 12 12 12 (469) Ns

RM D2 (SC) 1200m

G Boss (10) 2 2 1 (477) -
B Vorster (13) 1 1 2 (469) 2.25
V Duric (9) 7 6 3 (446) 1
D Moor (2) 6 8 4 (517) 0.5
S John (7) 10 10 5 (547) Hd
R Zawari (11) 4 5 6 (494) 0.5
S Noh (4) 8 7 7 (478) 0.75
JP Van Der Merwe (1) 5 3 8 (453) 0.75
M Rodd (12) 13 12 9 (492) 1.25
T See (3) 14 13 10 (466) 0.5
V Duric (7) 4 7 4 (511) 0.75
CS Chin (8) 12 14 11 (491) 0.75
N Jugall (5) 3 4 12 (476) Hd
CC Wong* (14) 9 9 13 (466) 3.5
M Lerner (6) 11 11 14 (451) 0.5

C4 D2 1100m

M Rodd (5) 1 1 1 (516) -
D Moor (11) 5 3 2 (476) 1
B Thompson (4) 3 2 3 (497) 2.5
V Duric (7) 4 7 4 (511) 0.75
T See (9) 7 6 5 (471) Nk
S John (3) 11 11 6 (548) Hd
I Saifudin (2) 9 9 7 (529) 2.5
TH Koh (14) 14 11 8 (522) Hd
N Jugall (1) 6 5 9 (546) 3.75
K A’isshuairi (6) 10 10 (486) Ns
B Woodworth (8) 2 4 11 (563) 3.25

C5 1200m

TH Koh (3) 1 1 1 (517) -
T See (10) 8 6 2 (545) 0.5
S Noh (7) 9 7 3 (482) 1.25
R Zawari (8) 4 5 4 (484) Nk

2 FULLLUCK 57 (43-13)
8 SATELLITE STAR 55.5 (63-17)
3 LUCKY BOY 57 c 54 (159-40)
12 MALELUAN 54 (214-53)
11 SO PERFECT 54 c 51 (687-115)
10 PACIFIC SECRET 54.5 (27-7)
2DONTLOOKDOWNNOME 55 (100-25)
7 RAPTOR 56.5 (148-26)

Winning stable: Little Green. **Trainer:** D Hill. **Time:** 1min 14.77sec (good). **Forecast:** \$125. **Tierce:** \$1818. **Quartet:** No winner (\$7556 carried forward). **P Forecast:** \$19 (5-7), \$25 (7-12), \$13 (5-12). **Trio:** \$80. **Course scratchings:** 13 Kubera’s Chief 14 Parker

RACE 7

5 WHAT’S NEW 57 (22-510)
12 LIM’S REVENT 53.5 c 52.5 (32-10)
14 SUN HOPLITES 51 (370-80)
6 MORITZ ECLIPSE 56 c 56 (241-62)
8 LORD OF CLOUD 55.5 (71-24)
1 CHOCANTE 57 (30-11)
10 BATTLE OF TROY 53.5 (405-83)
11 GLASGOW 53.5 (34-17)
2 MADE IN RUSSIA 57 (43-16)
4 TIME LORD 57 (214-11)
3 MURRAYFIELD 57 c 55 (105-32)
13 CLASSIFIED 53 c 50 (739-150)
9 REFRESH 55.5 (115-34)

Winning stable: Tampir. **Trainer:** C Brown. **Time:** 1min 23.15sec (good). **Forecast:** \$64. **Tierce:** \$980. **Quartet:** No winner (\$32654 carried forward). **P Forecast:** \$19 (5-7), \$25 (7-12), \$13 (5-12). **Trio:** \$222. **Course scratchings:** 15 On Electric Avenue 16 Destroyer Eclipse

RACE 8

4 WOLF WARRIOR 57 c 56 (10-510)
10 PIONEER SEVEN 55.5 c 51.5 (66-20)
8 CRAZY DREAMS 56 (64-18)
5 NATURAL IMPULSE 56.5 (172-30)
1 GLORIA ECLIPSE 58 (72-20)
3 SUPER HERO 57 (75-22)
12 OBSTACLES FREE 50 c 49 (379-74)

Winning stable: Chin Heng. **Trainer:** HW Tan. **Time:** 1min 6.25sec (good). **Forecast:** \$30. **Tierce:** \$51 (4-10-6), \$74 (4-11). **Quartet:** \$5403 (4-10-6-11), \$12200 (4-10-6-11). **P Forecast:** \$45 (14-10), \$5 (10-6), \$17 (4-11), \$31 (6-11), \$59 (10-11). **Trio:** \$12 (4-6-10), \$211 (4-10-11). **Course scratchings:** 3 Mon Energy

02-02-19 SATURDAY - EUROPE RACE CARD

EUROPE FEED: CAGNES-SUR-MER (#OTH1)

Race 1 07:15PM (€23,000) **CAGN-1500m**
1 3x4 Raihoan 58.0 (2) Prevaux-3.5 11.6% J Rouget 24.2% 1 51111 Falco Negro 60.5 (9) Pacaut-1.5 9.3% H Grew 16.5%
2 5 Moudri 58.0 (1) P Boudot 14.4% H Pantall 10.8% 2 56X1 Good Question 59.5 (6) M Guyon 14.1% Escuder 12.1% 11 0x777 Bongo 56.0 (14) Molins-3.0 4.0% J Capitte 7.5%
3 057x Larnour 58.0 (3) Cheminaud 13.6% Morem-N 5.8% 3 1779 Cafe Royal 57.5 (4) S Pasquier 12.5% Smrcek 10.9%
4 7x Singasoumi 58.0 (3) Soumillon 18.5% Prod’Ho 8.3% 4 7x Elysian Star 56.5 (8) Cheminaud 13.6% Morem-N 5.9%
5 0x57 Itz Al A Dream 58.0 (4) A Hamelin 8.4% Palussier 10.0% 5 X395 Libello 56.5 (3) Soumillon 18.5% C Boutin 5.1%
6 73x5 Imperient 58.0 (5) Oeslik-3.0 18.5% Escuder 12.1% 6 5444 Sorendom 56.5 (4) C Corrales 16.0% Seo 8.9%
7 6x52 Kenzohope 58.0 (6) M Guyon 14.1% C Boutin 5.1% 7 3x74 Aljmany 56.5 (5) Kouyunc-1.5 4.7% H Blume 11.8%
8 8 Pradaro 58.0 (7) E Harduin 7.3% C Boutin 5.1% 8 2x88 Max La Pippouli 56.5 (7) L Balis-4.0 4.7% R Collet 7.4%
9 5x4 Circle Of Hands 58.0 (8) Barbaud-2.5 7.8% Caullery 7.4% 9 0537 Espoir Du Ninion 56.5 (1) M Forest 7.3% Beuenez 2.9%

Race 2 07:45PM (€35,000) **CAGAW-1300m**
1 815x El Junco 56.5 (4) C Demuro 11.2% S Brogi 14.0% 1 5032 Jessy Love 60.0 (10) F Foresti 6.4% F Foresti 6.7%
2 5274 Tyson 56.5 (3) Alonso 0.0% R Blas 0.0% 2 6002 La Magicienne 60.0 (9) H Journaix 13.0% Lefebvre 6.5%
3 3416 Jaurais Du 56.5 (5) A Crastus 7.8% C Boutin 5.1% 3 5696 Petrus 59.5 (4) A Lemaitre 9.8% Caullery 7.4%
4 6129 Big Boots 56.5 (8) M Guyon 14.1% F Rossi 18.7% 4 37x0 Alilwallia 59.5 (1) M Grandin 12.0% Phillippon 6.2%
5 2135 Cape Florida 55.0 (2) T Piccone 7.6% Vermeule 11.5% 5 0088 Kenstow 59.0 (2) Montier-2.5 5.0% Caullery 7.4%
6 4006 Impeccable Ge 54.5 (3) J Auge 12.3% C Ferland 18.2% 6 6963 Peaceful City 57.5 (13) Pacaut-1.5 9.3% M Boutin 5.8%
7 3x22 Enough Said 55.0 (7) A Hamelin 8.4% Palussier 10.0% 7 1400 Nonandy Drea 57.0 (3) S Ruis 6.8% Martens 5.1%
8 58x0 She’s A Babe 55.0 (5) E Harduin 7.3% Palussier 10.0% 8 7060 Bingo 57.0 (11) C Stefan 10.4% J Capitte 7.5%

03-02-19 SUNDAY - MACAU RACE CARD

MACAU FEED: MACAU (#HK)

Race 1 02:00PM (HK\$170,000) **CAGN-1200m**
1 6528 River Colour 55.5 (3) Cheung-3.0 6.6% Cheong 10.6%
2 5274 Tyson 59.0 (8) Pescuit-2.5 4.7% P Lee 8.0%
3 9754 Full Of Luck 58.0 (8) R Maia 18.5% S Chow 7.7%
4 988x Play King 58.0 (4) W L Ho 14.4% K M Chin 7.7%
5 4265 Easy Thai 55.0 (7) L Corrales 16.0% Wong 10.9%
6 4083 Highspot 56.0 (2) M Nunes 16.0% Allendorf 8.3%
7 5332 River Double 56.0 (9) O Chavez 10.7% Cheong 10.6%
8 4006

SPORT

LAKERS READY FOR PLAY-OFF PUSH: JAMES

Star shows little sign of rust after long layoff as he scores team-high 24pts to lead side past Clippers

LOS ANGELES • Not being out on the floor represented the “toughest stretch” of LeBron James’ career, whose happy place has always been a National Basketball Association (NBA) court.

Although he made a triumphant return after 36 days on the sidelines, having not played since suffering a groin injury on Christmas Day, he admitted it would take him “a little while to get my rhythm back”.

The 15-time All-Star breathed new life into the floundering Los Angeles Lakers with a team-high 24 points to lead his team past the LA Clippers 123-120 in overtime at the Staples Centre on Thursday.

He showed little rustiness despite the longest absence of his 16-year career as he played 40 minutes, grabbed 14 rebounds, delivered nine assists and scored the go-ahead basket with 1min 15sec left.

But “The King” still felt he needed more time to get up to speed, telling reporters afterwards he was only at “80 per cent right now”.

He said: “I was good enough to feel confident to just keep pushing throughout the game. I want to see how my body reacts tomorrow.”

“That’s the tell-tale sign for me is how my body feels after having to play 40 minutes unfortunately, with the overtime.”

Yet as far as his teammates are concerned, a half-fit James is infinitely better than an absent James after going into a tailspin without him, dropping from fourth to ninth in the West after a 6-11 run.

Calling him “the greatest player on the planet”, centre Tyson Chandler, who scored four points, hailed the 34-year-old James for “bringing

his superpowers”.

Guard Rajon Rondo, whose 14-game absence coincided with James’ injury spell, benefited from having the team’s “quarterback” back as he added 14 points and 13 rebounds.

However, James shrugged off the praise, claiming “it just felt great to get back out there”, having “worked my a** off to get back to this point”.

He added: “This is where I can shut out everything, be out there with my guys, command my guys, and get a win on the road.”

“We got stops and we made some timely shots. Everybody was huge. It is going to be different guys every night for our team. We are starting to get our depth back.”

Their roster strength was telling as guard Lance Stephenson contributed 20 points, while forward Brandon Ingram had 19 to offset a 24-point showing from the Clippers’ Lou Williams and 17 from fellow guard Patrick Beverley.

And the Lakers (27-25) will need more of their rotation players to step up ahead of a gruelling run of games on the road, starting with today’s visit to Golden State.

James told ESPN’s Dave McMenamin that with the team having slipped out of play-off contention while he was sidelined, they had one message – that they “were all ready to make this push”.

He said: “We’re on the road for the whole month of February. We’ve got two home games. So if you want to make a push, why not make it on the road?”

“That’s the best time where you can come together as a team when you’re on the road and it’s just us. So let’s do it.”

Their next four games after the Warriors clash will see the Lakers travel to Indiana, Boston, Philadelphia and Atlanta before the All-Star Game on Feb 17.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, REUTERS



LeBron James being fouled by the Clippers’ Mike Scott in the first half at Staples Centre on Thursday. The Los Angeles Lakers forward made a triumphant return after 36 days on the sidelines, leading his team to a 123-120 overtime win over the Clippers. PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

9

Assists for LeBron James, who also had 24 points and 14 rebounds but fell just short of a triple-double.

Stephen Curry, wearing the Golden State Warriors’ Chinese New Year-themed uniform featuring the Chinese character for warrior, had 41 points against the Philadelphia 76ers. But the hosts lost 113-104 at the Oracle Arena in Oakland, California, on Thursday. PHOTO: REUTERS



Warriors mark CNY but Sixers spoil their joy

OAKLAND • It was a day of many firsts for the Philadelphia 76ers as they upset two-time defending National Basketball Association champions Golden State Warriors 113-104 on Thursday.

Ben Simmons learnt before the road game that he would be joining teammate Joel Embiid in Charlotte after being named an All-Star reserve for the first time.

The Rookie of the Year went on to prove the selectors right, finishing with 26 points, eight rebounds, six assists and three steals in what his coach Brett Brown said was the Aus-

tralian’s “best NBA game”.

He hailed Simmons as “a tremendous leader”, saying: “I thought he played the complete game.”

Embiid was in similarly inspired form, adding 26 points and grabbing 20 rebounds to cancel out a monster 41-point performance from Stephen Curry.

The upset not only ended the Sixers’ 10-game losing streak against the Warriors, dating back to 2013-14, but also snapped their 11-game winning run at home.

There was no Chinese New Year joy for the Warriors, who wore spe-

cially designed uniforms featuring elements of Chinese culture, such as the characters for “warrior”.

It is the seventh time they have done so since 2015. The gesture is a nod to their huge fan base in China and the strong Chinese presence in the San Francisco Bay area where they are based.

Separately, 2017 Most Valuable Player Russell Westbrook headed the list of reserves announced for the All-Star Game on Feb 17.

Simmons, Orlando Magic centre Nikola Vucevic, Denver Nuggets centre Nikola Jokic and Milwaukee

Bucks forward Khris Middleton will make their bows.

Seven reserves were selected by the league’s coaches from each conference, joining the 10 starters who were announced last week.

However, the game will not feature a showdown between the Eastern and Western Conferences. Instead, LeBron James of the Lakers, the top West vote-getter, and the Bucks’ Giannis Antetokounmpo, the top East vote-getter, will pick their sides. The teams will be determined in a two-round draft next Thursday. REUTERS, XINHUA

Knicks trade Porzingis to Dallas in bid to sign top stars

NEW YORK • The New York Knicks shook the National Basketball Association on Thursday by abruptly cutting ties with Kristaps Porzingis, sending the player long hailed as their saviour to the Dallas Mavericks in a blockbuster trade that could make the team a major player in free agency in July.

The deal came a week before the league’s trading deadline on Feb 7 and changes the course of the Knicks’ franchise.

Porzingis, Tim Hardaway Jr, Courtney Lee and Trey Burke have all been shipped to Dallas in exchange for Dennis Smith Jr, who was a first-round draft pick in 2017, two future first-round picks and the expiring contracts of DeAndre Jordan and Wesley Matthews.

The Latvian centre, who was increasingly unhappy about the Knicks’ position as also-rans (they have the league’s worst record at 10-40), asked to be traded on Thursday, according to a team statement and subsequent comments that Knicks president Steve Mills and general manager Scott Perry made.

But the Knicks and the Mavericks were already far along in trade talks before Porzingis lodged that request, according to sources with knowledge of the situation.

“As is standard for this time of year, we were exploring various options on potential trades,” Perry said. “Considering the uncertainty regarding Kristaps’ free-agent status (on July 1) and his request today to be traded, we made a trade that

we are confident improves the franchise.”

Mills also described the All-Star as a player who “no longer wanted to be part of our group”.

In a farewell Twitter post on Thursday night, Porzingis said: “New York will always have a special place in my heart. Grateful for everybody who made this journey so special for my family and I.”

Dallas’ willingness to acquire the contracts of Hardaway and Lee to land Porzingis clinched the deal and will position the Knicks to create nearly US\$75 million (\$\$101 million) in salary-cap space this summer – enough to offer maximum contracts to two of the top players expected to be free agents.

The Golden State Warriors’ Kevin

Durant, Kyrie Irving of the Boston Celtics and the Charlotte Hornets’ Kemba Walker are said to be among their targets.

They are now also on course to have a 14 per cent chance at securing the top pick in the June draft, which would enable them to select Zion Williamson, the highly coveted Duke forward.

Porzingis established himself as a marquee player last season, but has not played since tearing his anterior cruciate ligament last February.

The 23-year-old subsequently lost his trust in the Knicks’ organisation, which has been waning since the final days of Phil Jackson’s ill-fated tenure as team president and could not be repaired by Mills, Perry and David Fizdale, who is in his first season as their coach.

Even though Porzingis has been sidelined for a year, Dallas were sufficiently motivated to surrender their prized assets to get the deal done. The Mavericks now hope to make him the team’s co-star alongside Rookie of the Year front-runner Luka Doncic. NYTIMES



Kristaps Porzingis doing chin-ups during the New York Knicks’ media day on Sept 28, 2015. The Latvian centre has not played since tearing his anterior cruciate ligament a year ago but the Dallas Mavericks want to make their new signing the team’s co-star alongside Rookie of the Year front-runner Luka Doncic. PHOTO: NYTIMES

US\$75m

Salary-cap space the Knicks have freed up after Thursday’s deals to be able to chase two top players in the summer. Their targets include Golden State’s Kevin Durant, Boston’s Kyrie Irving and Charlotte’s Kemba Walker.

life

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Stall upset about how food was portrayed on the show
D6



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Jacelyn Neo, 19, Female

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With a bonus in the bank account and Chinese New Year around the corner, it is a good time to refresh the home with new appliances. PHOTOS: ISTOCKPHOTO, PANASONIC, ROBINSONS, TANGS

Power up with gadgets

The bonus is in, so go ahead and spoil yourself. Whether they are souped-up appliances or long-coveted gadgets, choices are aplenty. Check out these Instagram-worthy contraptions



Jan Lee



Cuisinart Soft Serve Ice Cream Maker, \$458
Available at Tangs (both online at tangsg.com and Tangs at Tang Plaza, 310 Orchard Road, and Tangs VivoCity, 1 Harbourfront Walk); and HipVan

Churn out ice creams, sorbets and other frozen treats in this nifty ice-cream maker. With a dispenser that allows users to deliver soft serve directly into a bowl or cone as well as three built-in dispensers for add-ons such as rainbow sprinkles, this product will cheer up any kid or adult with a sweet tooth.

The machine is easy to use. The double-insulated freezer bowl has to be frozen for 12 hours before use, but it takes only 20 minutes to make the dessert. Mix the ingredients together and churn it in the machine before freezing it. Then pour the mixture back into the dispenser and it is ready to be served.



La Marzocco Linea Mini, \$7,699
Available at Tangs at Tang Plaza and Tangs at VivoCity and online at tangsg.com

Handmade in Florence, Italy, the La Marzocco is a luxury espresso machine of the highest order. The Linea Mini is the smaller version of the brand's Linea Classic.

Although sized down for a home kitchen instead of a commercial one, the Linea Mini still retains some of the top-of-the-line espresso-making functions with dual boilers that optimise espresso brewing and steam production. It comes in a range of colours such as black, blue, red and yellow, so you can get a machine that fits your decor and personality.



Rommelsbacher Fruit Dryer, \$319
Available at retailers such as Robinsons (Robinsons The Heeren, 260 Orchard Road), Tangs and Harvey Norman

This automatic dehydrator can naturally dry and preserve fruit, vegetables and herbs with no fuss.

With four dehydrating shelves, three different wattage levels, a timer and an auto switch-off function, making apple chips, carrot chips or dried mushrooms will be a breeze.

Those on a clean-eating diet will know for certain that these dried snacks have no chemical additives.



Panasonic Bread Maker, \$329
Available at all major consumer electronics stores

Love the smell of freshly made bread in the morning, but do not have the time to bake it? Put in the right ingredients and this appliance will do the rest.

It has an automatic yeast, nuts and raisins dispenser which will add the ingredients into the dough at the optimal time so there is no need to watch over the process. Users can set the timer for up to 13 hours, allowing them to wake up or come home to freshly baked goodness.

Besides bread, this product can make dough for pizzas and dumplings as well as cakes and chocolates.

[MORE STORIES on D2](#)

FROM D1

Thermomix, \$2,320
Available at Thermomix
Singapore, 01-03 StarHub Green,
67 Ubi Avenue 1

This multi-functional kitchen appliance has been raved about by consumers all over the world. Designed by German company Vorwerk, the Thermomix combines more than 12 functions into one appliance – making it an extremely versatile helper in the kitchen.

It can, among other things, stir, mix, cook and emulsify.

Complicated dishes, including local delights such as mee siam, can be whipped up using its functions.

It comes with a cookbook and a recipe chip – a digital cookbook that when attached to the Thermomix will be displayed on the machine's screen.

Book a cooking demonstration at thermomix.com.sg and call 6634-2016 or e-mail info@thermomix.com.sg for product inquiries.



PHOTOS: GRANT,
HARVEY NORMAN,
LG, ROBINSONS,
SAMSUNG, TANGS,
THERMOMIX(R)
SINGAPORE, TOTO

Severin Popcorn Maker, \$49
Available at Robinsons The Heeren,
Harvey Norman and other major
consumer electronics stores

Pull off the perfect date night by popping your own popcorn. This product uses hot air to pop popcorn in just 2½ minutes. With no oil needed, cleaning up this machine is a breeze.



Philips Avance Collection Noodle Maker, \$319
Available at Harvey Norman Millenia Walk, 9 Raffles
Boulevard; and online at www.harveynorman.com.sg

Put the ingredients in and this noodle maker will produce 250g of noodles in just 10 minutes. Kneading time can be adjusted to achieve the desired texture.

It also comes with four shaping discs – for spaghetti/noodles, penne, fettuccine/ban mian, angel hair/mee kia – so it is easy to create a range of Asian and Western dishes.

Get creative by adding egg, spinach, beetroot or carrot juice to change the look and flavour of the noodles.



Foodsaver Vacuum Sealing System, \$299
Available at Tangs at Tang Plaza

This compact vacuum sealing system helps users store and preserve food hygienically and extends its shelf life, reducing food waste and contamination.

It works for both dry and moist food, so leftover meats, vegetables and dough for baking can all be sealed effectively.



Grant Uno Sous Vide Controller, \$281.90
Now at a promotional price of \$138 at Tott at 02-14 Century Square, 2 Tampines Central 5, and Tott at 02-427 Suntec, 3 Temasek Boulevard; and online at tottstore.com

If you are tired of frying or roasting, why not try the sous vide method of cooking?

The word is French for “under vacuum” as the technique calls for food to be sealed in an airtight bag, submerged in a water bath and cooked at a constant temperature.

A sous vide machine ensures that the temperature of your water bath stays regulated. The Grant Uno Sous Vide Controller is said to be the world's smallest and can be attached to any slow cooker for sous vide cooking, saving space in the home.



Kenwood Pasta Cutter, \$129
Available at Robinsons The Heeren

Those who enjoy making and kneading pasta dough, but cannot achieve a consistent shape or size, will love this machine.

Feed it the dough and obtain perfect 2mm-wide pasta. This appliance will make any dinner host look like a professional Italian chef.

Splurge on luxury

Toto Neorest XH II Washlet, \$26,140
Available at W Atelier, 01-01/03-01, 201 Henderson Road or e-mail enquiry@watelier.com for more information

This luxury toilet features some of the most well-loved aspects of Japanese toilets – and more. An automatic lid that opens and closes, front and rear cleansing that can be adjusted for personal preferences and a self-cleansing antibacterial nozzle are just some basic functions.

The Toto washlet also features a tornado flush – pressurised water from three powerful jets inside the bowl will create a whirlpool flush that will wash away all traces of waste.

It uses photocatalysis – a chemical process involving light – to clean itself.



Tiger 1.8-litre Pressure IH Rice Cooker, \$2,188
Available at Tangs at Tang Plaza and online tangs.com, as well as other major consumer electronics stores

Leave it to the Japanese to come up with rice cookers that can effortlessly make perfectly fluffy grains.

Rice is a staple in Asian families and rice cookers are a must-have in homes. The interior surface of the rice cooker is also slightly rough to create small water bubbles during the cooking process, which the brand says enhance the sweetness and chewy texture.

This has several different menu settings for eco-cooking, plain rice and even sushi rice.



Samsung's QuickDrive Washing Machine, from \$1,549 to \$1,899
Available at all major consumer electronic stores

Those who hate waiting for laundry to

be done will appreciate the Samsung QuickDrive. It reduces laundry washing time by half and, with the Super Speed setting, can wash a 5kg load in 39 minutes and save up to 20 per cent energy without compromising on performance.

It also features the innovative AddWash door, which allows users to throw in additional laundry at any time during the washing cycle so a forgotten shirt or a pair of socks do not have to wait until the next wash.

A smart washing machine with a dedicated mobile application, it can also give recommendations for optimal wash cycles depending on colour, fabric and extent of soiling.



LG Signature Refrigerator, \$10,888
Available at all major consumer electronics stores

Backed by a 10-year warranty, the 984-litre LG Signature Refrigerator, with its sleek textured steel finish and french doors, has more than just looks going for it.

When the InstaView feature is activated, the interior of the fridge lights up and users can look in without opening the door, thus saving energy by limiting the loss of cold air.

It has a smart sensor detector so those who have their hands full with groceries can open the doors by simply sliding their foot underneath the sensor.

janlee@sph.com.sg

RootAwakening



Mistletoe Fig a versatile plant
What is this plant (above) and its characteristics? Does it need a lot of water and sunlight?
E. Tan

The plant is commonly known as the mistletoe fig and is botanically known as *Ficus deltoidea*. It is a native plant of Singapore and is best grown in soil that is well drained and kept moist at all times. In an apartment, it grows best if it gets four to six hours of direct sunlight. Under good light, the leaves take

on a yellowish tinge, which makes them look like gold coins on a plant. The plant was sold as a Chinese New Year festive plant years back in Singapore. It is highly versatile. Due to the appearance of the fruit, which make the plant look like a mistletoe, it can also be used as a Christmas display plant.

Lemon plant infested with soft scales

My lemon plant has been bearing flowers and fruit. Occasionally, butterflies will lay eggs on the leaves. I have carefully and promptly removed the caterpillars to prevent them from eating my plant. Recently, I noticed brown round bugs (right) growing quite rapidly on the branches and leaves, causing white spots to appear on the leaves and leaving a sticky residue on them too. What are these bugs and how can I get rid of them?
Phyllis Low

may lead to sooty mould, which appears as a black coat that covers the leaves, reducing the ability of the plant to carry out photosynthesis. These pests can be removed using a soft toothbrush. For more serious infestations, you can apply a dilute solution of neem oil or summer oil weekly to kill adult insects and to keep the pest population in check. The oils cover and suffocate the insects. As these pesticides work via contact, you have to ensure that you cover all surfaces of the plant when you are spraying the pesticide. Repeated applications are often needed to manage the pest population. Also, ensure that you are growing your plant under direct sunlight – the lemon plant is a sun-loving plant and the lack of sunlight can lead to pests and diseases.



Vine's pink fruits are not edible

I planted this climber (right) a few months ago. It has started to bear fruit which are pink and about the size of cherries. What is the name of this plant? Are the fruit poisonous?
Stephanie Lee



There have been numerous inquiries about the identity of this plant. The vine is botanically known as *Cayratia mollissima* and it does not have a common English name yet. Although it belongs to the grape family (*Vitaceae*) and its fruit look like grapes, the attractive pink fruit are inedible. They have been found to contain numerous minute calcium oxalate crystals which can penetrate the soft tissues of the mouth, causing intense pain.

Turkey berry's fruit often used in food

This plant (right) grew in my garden and is now about 1.6m tall. It has a slim trunk and branches and needs support to keep it upright. It flowers readily and has blooms with small white petals and yellow stigma, and its fruit look like small green peas. What is the plant's name and are the fruit edible?
Richard Neo



The shrub appears to be *Solanum torvum*, which is commonly known as devil's fig, prickly nightshade, wild eggplant, turkey berry and pea eggplant. This plant produces fruit that are eaten by birds and the seeds are dispersed through bird droppings. The fruit is a small round berry, which is harvested for food during the immature stage, when it is firm and green. It is commonly added to Thai green curry and is documented to have traditional medicinal uses.

Bird's-eye chilli tree dried up

I placed this bird's-eye chilli tree (right) along the corridor of my flat, but it did not survive. What happened?
Lim Sze Min



PHOTOS: E. TAN, LIM SZE MIN, PHYLLIS LOW, RICHARD NEO, STEPHANIE LEE

The plant looks totally dried up. The chilli plant is one which needs regular watering. Under sunny conditions where it grows best, it needs to be watered at least once a day. Ensure the roots are kept moist at all times. The plant should never be allowed to dry out totally. If you are growing it in a high-rise apartment, avoid an area that is too windy. Constant winds can dry out the plant – moving air will take away moisture faster than the roots can uptake it from the soil. As with all edible plants, the chilli plant is a sun-loving one and needs at least four hours of direct sunlight to thrive.

stlife@sph.com.sg

• Answers by Dr Wilson Wong, an NParks-certified practising horticulturist and park manager. He is the founder of Green Culture Singapore and an adjunct assistant professor (Food Science & Technology) at the National University of Singapore.

• Have a gardening query? E-mail it with clear, high-resolution pictures of at least 1MB, if any, and your full name to stlife@sph.com.sg

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TheChicHome

Warm, white and bright

A clean palette and clever ideas, such as using bay windows for display or storage, give this apartment a bright boost

Lynn Tan

For Mr Manfred Schmoelz and his wife, moving to an apartment that is around two-thirds the size of their previous rental unit meant that they had to make efficient use of space.

The 1,733 sq ft apartment in Robertson Quay is by no means small, but “the original layout was not well-appointed and we had many specific requirements”, says Mrs Schmoelz.

Her husband is the president for Asia-Pacific for Assurant Group, a premier global provider of risk management solutions.

The German-Singaporean couple turned to Mr William Ng and Mr Kho Keguang from Studio Wills + Architects for help.

Mrs Schmoelz says: “We looked through their portfolio and their overall style seem clean and minimalist without being austere.”

The couple also noted that the studio’s projects incorporate interesting design elements, but are not overly embellished or ornate, and those elements do not overwhelm the rest of the scheme.

“We also had our own ideas and felt that Studio Wills + Architects could help us execute them brilliantly,” Mrs Schmoelz says.

Some of the more major work done in the former four-bedroom condominium apartment include demolishing the walls of the master bedroom next to the living room, to create a separate television lounge area and incorporate a small study nook with built-in storage.

Two bedrooms towards the rear of the apartment were combined into a new master suite comprising a sleeping area, walk-in wardrobe and an ensuite bath.

The number of bedrooms was reduced from four to two, which suits the couple’s lifestyle better as they now have more space to entertain and relax.

As the building is supported by structural shear walls and the apartment has numerous bay windows, the design team was inspired to come up with interesting solutions to address the home owners’ needs.

For example, a structural shear wall became a free-standing element when the walls around it were removed to create the television lounge.

The design duo transformed what would otherwise have been an obstruction within an open-concept space into a visual focus and a point of orientation by rendering it black and increasing its girth. The additional width also helped conceal cables.

One side of the wall faces the television lounge and this is where the television set is mounted.

The other side facing the dining area is where Mr Schmoelz’s antique piano takes pride of place, together with Chinese calligraphy by Mrs Schmoelz’s father.

The need for a more efficient use of space prompted the design team to explore how the many bay windows could double as storage, shelves and showcases.

The home owner has a large col-



White furniture pieces such as a sofa and armchair anchor the living room, while an antique chest – which doubles as a coffee table – and framed paintings add interest.

PHOTOS: SPH MAGAZINES, ART DIRECTION: NONIE CHEN

lection of books and the bay window in the original master bedroom was converted into bookshelves that complement the television lounge and study corner.

Mr Ng says: “We did not want to seal off the bay window completely, so we added sliding panels behind the shelves. These can be opened to let more light in.”

The interlocking L-shaped configuration of the shelves creates visual interest and allows flexibility in arranging books or even using the shelves as a display.

Another bay window in the dining area and dry kitchen is now a display for the couple’s wine glass collection.

Adopting a similar approach as the bookshelves, a sliding panel behind the showcase allows the window to be opened when more natural light is preferred.

The home owners moved in in December 2017 after a four-month renovation. They declined to reveal the cost.

The home very much reflects their tastes and suits their lifestyle. “It is a cosy, warm and intimate apartment that we have always wanted,” says Mrs Schmoelz.

stlife@sph.com.sg

• This article first appeared in the January issue of Home & Decor, which is published by SPH Magazines.



• Get the February and latest issue of Home & Decor (left) now at all newsstands or download the digital edition of Home & Decor from the

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The dining counter (left) has been rotated 90 degrees, so that when it is paired with the bespoke dining table, the two form a continuous surface (above) for food preparation and dining.



We did not want to seal off the bay window completely, so we added sliding panels behind the shelves. These can be opened to let more light in.



MR WILLIAM NG, from Studio Wills + Architects, on converting a bay window into bookshelves (above)



A minimalist aesthetic creates a soothing vibe in the master suite.

STwine

our best picks



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The National Kaohsiung Centre for the Arts in Taiwan, also known as Weiwuying after its surrounding park, is the world's largest single-roof performing arts centre. PHOTO: NYTIMES

Arty 'spaceship' lands in Taiwan

The National Kaohsiung Centre for the Arts has raised the city's cultural prestige

KAOHSIUNG (Taiwan) • Some people say the National Kaohsiung Centre for the Arts looks like a spaceship. Others think it resembles a giant stingray.

One point is not contested, however. With a look inspired by banyan trees and the local shipping industry, the facility has raised the cultural prestige of this southern Taiwanese city while providing residents with a popular public space.

The performing arts centre, known as Weiwuying after its surrounding park, is the world's largest single-roof arts venue.

The US\$348-million (S\$469-million) facility opened in October last year with indoor and outdoor concerts, signalling its arrival as a

new destination for world-class performances in Kaohsiung, long derided by the Taiwanese people as being a "cultural desert".

The opening capped a transition for the site, a former military base established by imperial Japan during its colonial rule of Taiwan.

"The building invites you to use it, acting as an extension of the park and the city," said Ms Francine Houben, the building's designer and creative director at Dutch architecture firm Mecanoo.

"I like to call it the living room of Kaohsiung."

Attendance has averaged above 80 per cent for the first season of performances at the art centre.

Many performances, including the December opening of the opera house featuring Taiwan's world-renowned dance troupe Cloud Gate, have sold out quickly.

For the arts centre's grand opening, several thousand people attended a special performance at a terrace, where the canopy-like roof slopes to the ground, creating an amphitheatre.

It has become a popular place for folk to sit and watch the sunset.

Ms Houben and her team at Mecanoo initially struggled to find the right exterior for the massive arts facility, but found inspiration in the city's maritime identity – two decades ago, it was the world's third-busiest port.

She said: "We tried several options without success."

"We continued our search for the building's skin and the idea arose to use the finely tuned, locally accessible techniques of Kaohsiung's ship-building industry."

Selling the idea of making a modern, multi-million-dollar cultural centre that had an exterior similar to a container ship – rather than something sleek like glass and

steel – took some work.

Its modern design reflects Taiwan's steady move away from Chinese-style design after democratisation, a sign of the shift of identity here from Chinese to Taiwanese.

Ms Houben said: "We had to convince everyone that the Banyan Plaza should have the detailing of a cargo ship and not of a luxury yacht."

"We wanted to employ the ship builders to do what they do best – create a durable, long-lasting skin on a scale that some contractors would be intimidated by."

The strategy has found an anchor, with the area around the Weiwuying arts centre becoming a rising star of the city's property market.

Property prices around the park and arts centre have risen by 15 to 20 per cent in the past two years, said Mr Alex Kuo, director of Yung-Ching Realty.

He said: "When construction of the Weiwuying arts centre was completed, high-end residential developments began to arrive in the area."

"Where older apartments typically sold for about US\$3,000 per square foot, newer developments are now commanding prices upwards of US\$9,000 per square foot." NYTIMES

I toured the home of master potter Iskandar Jalil.

Toh Wen Li
Journalist
The Straits Times



Journalism goes beyond the 24-hour news cycle of current affairs. I have journeyed through the homes of artists and discovered the muse of Singapore's greatest creative minds. As a journalist, you never know what to expect at work. If you're inspired by the spirit of discovery, come take the path less travelled.



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PHOTOS:
THE WASHINGTON
POST, DESMOND FOO

Chinatown stall manager upset over The Bachelor

The episode of the American dating show featured its contestants making a mockery of Asian cuisine

Desiree Loh

When representatives of American dating show The Bachelor approached Ms Li Mu Zi last October to order an array of barbecued dishes from her stall, she was excited for her food to be showcased on television.

What the 36-year-old manager of BangBang Seafood BBQ in Chinatown did not realise was that her stall's barbecued chicken feet, pork intestine skewers and pig trotters would be met by exclamations of disgust and treated like a joke by the show's contestants.

"I knew they were looking for unusual and 'shocking' dishes to boost their ratings and I thought it would have all been in good fun.

"But just how bad could our food have been for them to react that way? These are dishes that we enjoy eating," she added.

Ms Li was referring to the episode of The Bachelor which aired on Monday in the United States, in which the cast, including the show's bachelor, Colton Underwood, travelled to Singapore.

This episode drew the ire of Asians and Americans for featuring a segment in which contestants made a mockery of Asian cuisine and perpetuated stereotypes that Asian food is dirty and unsophisticated.

A blooper video on YouTube features contestant Onyeka Ehie retching into a rubbish bin after taking a bite of the stall's barbecued

chicken's feet.

In the video, the other dishes served were not immediately recognisable.

The video has garnered more than 36,000 views since it was uploaded on Monday.

While the show is broadcast in the US and other countries, it is not being broadcast in Singapore.

Ms Li is concerned that her business will be affected by the show.

"If Singaporeans know that we are the ones who prepared the dishes, I'm afraid that they may hold us responsible for serving the cast," she said.

"Now that the video is online, what if tourists watch it and they don't dare to come to our restaurant?" she added.

The Singapore Tourism Board (STB) said it provided assistance to The Bachelor to profile Singapore and that the show enjoys a wide following on prime-time American television.

Ms Kershing Goh, STB's regional director for the Americas, added: "As per network policy, however, the producer reserved the rights to make final decisions on all content and STB was not consulted on the final production."

When The Straits Times visited the stall on Thursday, there were five people dining in the restaurant.

Cuban air stewardess Rozina Michal, 32, who was in Singapore on holiday, said: "The way they behaved was offensive. If they did not like the food, they did not have



to react that way.

"They could have just not eaten it, instead of eating and throwing up afterwards."

Mr Tong Bo, 36, a Chinese national who works in Singapore, was unperturbed by the cast's reactions.

"It's ultimately about personal preference. I love chicken feet, but if foreigners don't like it, that's up to them.

"I only need to be concerned with my own taste in food," he said.

desloh@sph.com.sg

I knew they were looking for unusual and 'shocking' dishes to boost their ratings and I thought it would have all been in good fun. But just how bad could our food have been for them to react that way?



MS LI MU ZI, manager of BangBang Seafood BBQ (above) on the reaction of the contestants of The Bachelor (top) to the restaurant's dishes

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SSO loosens up for a night of rock

REVIEW/CONCERT

ROCK IN 60 MINUTES

Singapore Symphony Orchestra/
Nick Omiccioli and Paul Cesarczyk
(electric guitars)/Jacomio Bairos
(conductor)
Esplanade Concert Hall/Thursday

Marc Rochester

If the first of the Singapore Symphony Orchestra's Red Balloon concert series did not quite hit the spot last month, the second on Thursday got a lot closer.

For a start, the orchestra's members dispensed with their ties and jackets and, while they still seemed stiff and rigid, at least there was a hint of informality.

Second, there was former tuba player with the SSO, Jacomo Bairos, who is rapidly earning a reputation as an inspirational and highly communicative conductor.

Among his former colleagues, he seemed not only perfectly at home, but also at times drew from them some truly commendable playing.

Third, there was the music. The programme did not so much force the SSO to climb out of its rut, but sent it scurrying off around brightly lit uplands where there was no hiding place for anyone who did not quickly get into the groove.

Nick Omiccioli's was a brilliant piece of orchestral writing, scintillating in its use of heavy metal and rock gestures, and dazzling in the collective virtuosity it called on for the whole orchestra.

A tremendous orchestral showpiece

in its own right, inspired by Bairos' direction, for a time, it seemed as if the SSO members were closet rockers.

Sadly, things went downhill after that. Guillaume Connesson's Night-Club was too firmly rooted in the classical orchestral world for the moments of jive and boogie to win the day, and the orchestra's performance was neat, tidy and completely soulless.

It was not their fault that Bryce Dessner's St Carolyn By The Sea never induced them to peer even briefly over the edge of their comfy rut.

Billed as a concerto for two electric guitars, neither Omiccioli nor Paul Cesarczyk had anything to do which was not totally innocuous – no crazy rock-inspired riffs here, merely gentle picking at notes.

The music inhabited a world so redolent of Arvo Part's bell-driven,

drifting mysticism that it was difficult to comprehend what it was doing in a programme with a rock theme.

Three pieces by Frank Zappa were presented as well-mannered and neatly groomed – the classic G-Spot Tornado more like a bracing breeze than a tornado, while Peaches En Regalia had about it more than a whiff of Peaches And Cream.

With two superb arrangements of numbers from Radiohead and Daft Punk by a former SSO trumpeteer, Sam Hyken, the orchestra finally got back into "rock mode". Bairos worked his socks off in these, but it was well worth it.

With some stunning playing from the rhythm section, the SSO positively leapt out of its rut and had a real ball.

Comics

BABY BLUES



GARFIELD



Free to air

CHANNEL 5

AM
6.00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 15 (HD) (V)
6.40 Just For Laughs Gags 17 (V)
7.00 The Dr Oz Show 8 (HD) (IE)
8.00 Why It Matters (HD) (CA)
8.30 Wheel Of Fortune 35 (HD) (V)
9.30 Secret Meat Business (IE)
10.00 Make You Laugh Out Loud 3 (HD) (V)
10.30 Arts 21 (Cul)
11.00 Worst Cooks In America 7 – Celebrity Edition (HD) (PG) (IE)
PM
12.00 Discover Kansai: Exploring Kyoto, Nara And Osaka By Train (V)
12.30 Films & Stars (PG) (V)
1.00 America's Got Talent 12 (HD) (PG) (V)
2.00 Carpool Karaoke 2018 Special (PG) (V)
3.00 Little Big Shots: Forever Young (PG) (V)
4.00 Revolution (HD) (PG) (V)
5.00 Designer In The House 2 (HD) (V)
5.30 Divided (US) (HD) (PG) (V)
6.00 Hungry For Love (HD) (V)
6.30 The Simpsons 29 (HD) (PG) (SC)
7.00 Mr Popper's Penguins (M)
9.00 News Tonight (HD)
9.30 The Strangest Weather On Earth 2 (HD) (CC)
10.00 Mercy (PG13) (M) (Premiere)
11.40 The Shannara Chronicles (PG13) (D)
AM
12.30 Grimm 5 (HD) (PG13) (D)
2.10 Timeless (HD) (PG) (D)
3.00 Just For Laughs Gags 17 (HD)
3.20 Worst Cooks In America 7 – Celebrity Edition (PG) (IE)
4.20 Wheel Of Fortune 35 (HD) (V)
5.10 The Dr Oz Show 8 (HD) (IE)

CHANNEL 8

AM
6.00 Neighbourhood Chef 2 (HD) (V)
7.00 Portrait Of Home 2 (D)
9.00 Smart Kid (S)
9.30 Fire robo (S)
10.00 The Adventures Of Little Carp (S)
10.30 All New Jackie Chan Adventures (S)
11.00 The Love 97.2 Breakfast Quartet 2 (CC) (V)
PM
12.00 Foodie Sunday (V)

1.00 Golden Age Talentime (HD) (CC) (V)
2.00 Challenge The Impossible 2 (HD) (V)
4.00 My Star Guide 13 (HD) (V)
4.30 Beyond Words (PG) (CC) (D)
6.30 Singapore Today (HD) (News)
7.00 Spring Flower (PG) (CC) (D)
10.00 News Tonight (HD)
10.30 Saturday Cinema: I Love HK 2013 (PG) (CC) (M)
AM
12.30 My Amazing Bride (PG) (CC) (D)
2.30 Behind Every Job (IE)
3.30 The Ten Deadly Sins (PG13) (D)
4.00 The Deer And The Cauldron (HD) (PG) (D)

CHANNEL U

AM
10.00 Shake It Up (V)
11.30 Project W (IE)
PM
12.30 Blue Tick (PG) (CC) (D)
1.30 World Food (CC) (IE)
2.30 Artistic Journeys (IE)
3.00 Golden Rainbow (PG) (CC) (D)
5.00 Lady With Class (PG) (CC) (D)
7.00 Puzzle Masters (V)
9.00 The Entertainer (PG) (CC) (D)
11.00 News Tonight
11.30 Puzzle Masters (V)
AM
1.30 Lord Of Shanghai (PG) (CC) (D)
2.30 Close

CNA

AM
6.00 Singapore Tonight
7.00 News Now
7.30 Correspondents' Diary
8.00 News Now
8.30 This Weekend
9.00 News Now
9.30 Once A Refugee
10.02 Insight
11.00 News Now
11.30 Conversation With
PM
12.00 News Now
12.30 Once A Refugee
1.02 Conversation With
1.30 The Making Of Singapore On Film
2.00 News Now
2.30 This Weekend
3.00 News Now
3.30 Asia Business First Weekend

4.02 Insight
5.00 News Now
5.30 Edible Wild
6.00 News Now
6.30 Once A Refugee
7.02 Japan Hour (English Subtitles)
8.00 Primetime Asia
8.30 Correspondents' Diary
9.02 Singapore On Film
10.00 Singapore Tonight
10.30 Money Mind
11.02 Japan Hour (English Subtitles)
AM
12.00 News Now
12.30 Conversation With
1.02 Correspondents' Diary
1.30 Money Mind
2.00 News Now
2.30 Once A Refugee
3.02 Insight
4.00 News Now
4.30 Money Mind
5.02 Singapore On Film
Programmes may be pre-empted by breaking news

VASANTHAM

PM
1.00 Thein Nilavu (PG) (M)
4.00 Chef (PG) (M)
7.00 Thirai Express (HD) (CC) (V)
8.00 Vera Level (HD) (CC) (IE)
8.30 Tamil Seithi (News)
9.00 Oru Nalla Naal Paathu Solren (PG) (CC) (M)
AM
12.00 Tamil Seithi (News) (R)
12.30 Close

OKTO

AM
7.00 Tip The Mouse (P)
8.00 Let's Go Pocoyo (P)
8.30 Wissper (HD) (P)
9.00 Littlest Pet Shop (S)
9.30 Metalions (S)
10.00 Pokemon The Series: Sun And Moon (HD) (S)
10.30 Smurfs (HD) (S)
11.00 Lego Ninjago – Sons Of Garmadon (HD) (S)
11.30 Extreme Football (HD) (S)
PM
12.00 Totally Totto (HD) (S)

12.30 Fableicious (HD) (PG) (S)
1.00 Loud House (S)
1.30 Jane And The Dragon (S)
2.00 Inazuma Eleven (S)
2.30 The Deep (HD) (S)
3.00 Future Card Buddyfight (HD) (PG) (S)
3.30 CardFight!! Vanguard G: Next (HD) (S)
4.00 Bear Grylls Survival School (HD) (S)
4.30 Loud House (S)
5.00 Jane And The Dragon (S)
5.30 Inazuma Eleven (S)
6.00 Basic Mini-tary Training (S)
6.30 Museum Mysteries (S)
7.00 The Deep (HD) (CC) (S)
7.30 Future Card Buddyfight (HD) (CC) (S)
8.00 CardFight!! Vanguard G: Next (HD) (CC) (S)
8.30 Bear Grylls Survival School (HD) (CC) (S)
9.00 Sportsmax (HD) (Sports)
9.30 Whacked Out Sports (PG) (V)
10.00 ONE Championship 2018/19: Legends Of The World (Manila) (PG13) (Sports)
AM
12.20 Close

SURIA

PM
3.00 Juara Memasak Milenia (CC) (V)
4.00 Bisik Pada Langit (PG) (CC) (M)
6.00 Tahu Nahu (S)
6.30 Kerjayaan Wanita: 8 Wanita Singapura 2014 (CC) (IE)
7.00 Jenayah Tersembunyi (PG) (CC) (IE)
7.30 Resipi Rahsia 2 (CC) (IE)
8.00 Berita (HD) (News)
8.30 Jiran (IE) (Debut)
9.30 Setia Menunggumu (PG) (CC) (D)
10.30 Extreme Roadtrip (IE)
11.00 Detik (PG) (CA)
11.30 Berita (HD) (News) (R)
AM
12.00 Close

C: Children; CA: Current Affairs;
CC: Closed Captions; Cul: Culture;
D: Drama; IE: Info-Ed; M: Movies;
P: Preschool; PG: Parental Guidance;
R: Repeat; S: Schoolkids; SC: Sitcom;
V: Variety

Programme schedules correct at time of printing. Telecast details from Mediacorp, StarHub and Singtel TV. For pay TV updates, go to www.starhub.com/tv or www.singtelv.com.sg

StarHub TV

HISTORY (CHANNEL 401)

AM
8.30 Pawn Stars 19
9.00 Swamp Mysteries With Troy Landry
9.55 Alone 4/10.50 Counting Cars 6
11.20 JFK Declassified: Tracking Oswald
PM
12.15 Hunting ISIS
1.10 Mountain Men 7
2.05 Swamp Mysteries With Troy Landry
3.00 Alone 4/3.55 Storage Wars: Miami
4.25 The Pickers 11/5.20 Road Hawks
6.15 Counting Cars 5
6.40 Storage Wars 12
7.10 The Curse Of Oak Island 5
8.05 Ancient Aliens 11
9.00 History Drama: Vikings 5
9.55 Monster Motor Challenge

LIFETIME (CHANNEL 514)

AM
6.00 Married At First Sight US 5
9.00 Married At First Sight Australia 4
PM
12.00 Born This Way 2
1.00 This Time Next Year
1.55 Bringing Ashley Home
3.30 Sea Change
5.05 Gok's Fill Your House For Free
6.00 Married At First Sight US 5
9.00 Arranged 2
10.00 Love By The 10th Date
11.35 My Haunted House 3

HBO (CHANNEL 601)

AM
8.40 Take The Lead
10.35 Lady Bird (NC16)
PM
12.05 Braven (NC16)
1.40 Bridget Jones's Baby (NC16)
3.40 Planes: Fire & Rescue
5.00 Star Trek (2009)
7.05 The HBO Movie Show
7.30 Pitch Perfect 3 (NC16)
9.00 Ready Player One (NC16)
11.20 True Detective 3 (NC16)
AM
12.20 Starsky & Hutch (NC16)

CINEMAX (CHANNEL 611)

AM
7.15 All The Way (NC16)
9.25 Kidnap (NC16)
11.00 Strike Back 6 (NC16)
PM
12.00 Lethal Weapon 4
2.10 Congo/4.00 Mercury Rising
5.50 Star Wars: Episode II – Attack Of The Clones/8.15 Unbreakable
10.00 Strike Back 6 (NC16)
11.00 Killing Hasselhoff (M18)
AM
12.20 The Corruptor

HUB E CITY (CHANNEL 825)

AM
7.00 Chinese Restaurant 2 (HD)

9.00 Noble Aspirations (HD)
PM
12.00 Hot Door Night 16 (HD)
1.00 Mr Player 7 (HD)
3.00 Singer 2019 (HD)
5.00 Viva La Romance (HD)
7.00 Perfect Match 6 (HD)
8.45 Wok Of Love (HD)
11.00 Happy Camp 2 (HD)

HUB SPORTS 1 (CHANNEL 201)

AM
7.00 ISU European Figure Skating Championships 2019: Exhibition
9.30 Extreme Sports: World Surf League 2018: Billabong Pipe Masters Highlights
10.30 Tennis: Deuce 2019/11.00 Tennis: ATP World Tour Uncovered 2019
11.30 National Basketball League 2018/19: Round 16 Cairns Taipans Vs Adelaide 36ers
PM
1.30 Mountain Bike: Enduro World Series 2018: Italy Highlights/2.00 Motorsports: FIA World RallyCross Championship 2018 Round 4 Great Britain Highlights
3.00 Multi Sport: Action Sports World 2018
4.00 Asean Basketball League 2018/19: Mono Vampire Vs Zhuhai Wolf Warriors
6.00 Tennis: ATP Champions Tour 2018
6.30 Tennis: 2018 Davis Cup By BNP Paribas Finals: France Vs Croatia Day 3 (Rubber 4)
9.30 Mountain Bike: Enduro World Series 2018: Season Review Highlights
10.00 2019 Davis Cup By BNP Paribas Qualifier Round: Germany Vs Hungary: Day 1

HUB SPORTS 2 (CHANNEL 202)

AM
6.30 HSBC World Rugby Sevens World Series 2018/19 Round 4 Sydney: Matches 1 To 12 (Live)
11.00 Magazine: Omnisport.TV
11.30 Fiba World Basketball 2019
11.50 HSBC World Rugby Sevens World Series 2018/19 Round 4 Sydney: Matches 13 To 16 (Live)
PM
1.30 The Football Review
2.00 Wrestling: WWE Bottomline (PG)
3.00 Fiba World Basketball 2019
3.20 HSBC World Rugby Sevens World Series 2018/19 Round 4 Sydney: Matches 17 To 24 (Live)
6.30 Xiamen Marathon 2019 Highlights
7.30 Magazine: Omnisport.TV
8.00 Asean Basketball League 2018/19 Hong Kong Eastern Vs Macau Black Bears (Live)
10.00 Wrestling: WWE Afterburn (PG)
10.55 Football: EFL Championship 2018 Matchday 30 Sheffield United Vs Bolton Wanderers (Live)
AM
1.00 Magazine: Omnisport.TV
1.30 Football: EFL Championship 2018 Matchday 30 Leeds United Vs Norwich City (Live)
3.30 Wrestling: WWE Bottomline (PG)
4.30 Magazine: The Burning Issue
5.00 Asean Basketball League 2018/19 Westports Malaysia Dragons Vs CLS Knights Indonesia

Singtel TV

CARTOON NETWORK (CHANNEL 226)

AM
6.00 Oggy & The Cockroaches
7.00 The Tom And Jerry Show
7.55 The Heroic Quest Of The Valiant Prince Ivandoe
8.00 Running Man Animation
9.00 Teen Titans Go!
9.30 Transformers: Cyberverse
10.00 Apple & Onion
10.30 Ninjago: Masters Of Spinjitzu
11.00 OK K.O.! Let's Be Heroes
11.30 Ben 10
PM
12.00 Unikitty
12.30 The Amazing World Of Gumball
1.00 Craig Of The Creek
1.30 Running Man Animation
2.00 We Bare Bears
2.30 The Powerpuff Girls
3.00 Summer Camp Island
3.30 Supernobots
4.00 Dreamworks Dragons: Defenders Of Berk
5.00 Transformers: Cyberverse
5.30 Unikitty
6.00 Teen Titans Go!
7.00 Craig Of The Creek
8.00 Running Man Animation
9.00 Oggy & The Cockroaches
9.30 We Bare Bears
10.00 Regular Show
10.30 Steven Universe
11.00 Clarence
11.30 Adventure Time

AXN (HD) (CHANNEL 304)

AM
6.00 Supernatural 14
6.50 The Amazing Race 29
9.25 MacGyver 3
10.20 Seal Team 2
11.00 Criminal Minds: Beyond Borders
PM
1.00 The Blacklist 6
1.55 Caught On Camera With Nick Cannon 2
2.50 Supernatural 14
3.45 Instinct
4.40 Seal Team 2
5.30 Criminal Minds: Beyond Borders
7.15 Team Ninja Warrior 2
8.55 MacGyver 3
9.45 Hawaii Five-0 9
10.35 The Blacklist 6
11.25 Don't Blink
11.55 MacGyver 3

WARNER TV (HD) (CHANNEL 306)

AM
6.00 Race To The Scene
7.30 Top 20 Funniest 2
9.00 Gotham 5
9.50 Friends 9
10.15 The Big Bang Theory 12
10.40 Young Sheldon 2
11.05 Harry Potter And The Prisoner Of Azkaban
PM
1.45 Final Destination 5
3.25 Breaking The Magician's Code
4.15 The Big Bang Theory 9
5.05 Getaway
6.45 The Intern
9.00 Blindspot 4
9.50 Lights Out
11.20 The Big Bang Theory 12
11.45 Young Sheldon 2

COMEDY CENTRAL ASIA (HD) (CHANNEL 324)

AM
6.00 The Reaction Hall Of Fame
7.35 Super Ultimate Candid Camera
8.10 Mr Bean
9.00 Just For Laughs Gags 14
9.25 Back To School Special
10.10 I Live With Models
11.10 The Daily Show 24
11.35 A Michael Jackson Celebration
PM
12.20 The Goldbergs 5
1.10 Hot In Cleveland 6
1.55 Above Average Presents
2.05 Saturday Night Live 43
2.55 The Comedy Jam
3.45 The Goldbergs 5
4.35 Hot In Cleveland 6
5.25 Saturday Night Live 43
6.05 Amazingness
6.55 The Jim Jefferies Show
8.35 A Michael Jackson Celebration
9.20 Back To School Special
10.05 Saturday Night Live 44
11.10 Funny As Hell 4
11.40 Inside Amy Schumer 2

JIA LE (HD) (CHANNEL 502)

AM
6.00 Stylish Man
7.00 Super Nightclub
8.30 Top Singers
10.00 All Out Of Love
PM
12.00 Stylish Man
1.00 Super Nightclub
2.30 All Out Of Love
4.30 Top Singers
6.00 Stylish Man
7.00 All Out Of Love
9.00 The Legend Of Golden Music
10.00 Hua Hee Seko-Lah 5
10.30 The Golden Melodies 2018

TheStarsSay

Aries (March 21 – April 19)

Show others the way. Your mental energy helps you see opportunities where others see only confusion.

Taurus (April 20 – May 20)

You are upset with the way things are going, but your energy is wrong for confronting the situation.

Gemini (May 21 – June 20)

You are finding it easier to get along with people. Your social energy makes it easy to understand everyone.

Cancer (June 21 – July 22)

You cannot win an emotional argument. If you push people's rational buttons, you can come out ahead.

Leo (July 23 – Aug 22)

You need to let go a little. Find a way to relax without making a big deal out of every little thing.

Virgo (Aug 23 – Sept 22)

Shake things up a little. Small things can yield huge improvements if you are willing to experiment.

Libra (Sept 23 – Oct 22)

Your ability to work miracles is waxing, so make the most of it. It will make life easier for you and others.

Scorpio (Oct 23 – Nov 21)

Things need a big change and fast. The situation demands something quicker and more to the point.

Sagittarius (Nov 22 – Dec 21)

You can make new connections. Get your people to try whatever it is you are doing to inspire yourself.

Capricorn (Dec 22 – Jan 19)

Your plans might not go as well as you had hoped, but you should be able to manoeuvre out of trouble.

Aquarius (Jan 20 – Feb 18)

Do not worry about your ambition, but cultivate it. Your great energy will help to advance your agenda.

Pisces (Feb 19 – March 20)

Your wisdom is not always accessible. You should bust out with a few sage words to those in need.

• Provided by Astrology.com (www.astrology.com)

Radio

KISS92 (TODAY)

AM
6.00 Desiree Lai
PM
12.00 Charmaine Yee
8.00 Jill Lim

KISS92 (TOMORROW)

AM
6.00 American Top 40 With Ryan Seacrest
PM
12.00 Jill Lim

ONE FM 91.3 (TODAY)

AM
6.00 Cheryl Miles
PM
12.00 Harry Corro

ONE FM 91.3 (TOMORROW)

PM
12.00 Harry Corro

MONEY FM 89.3 (WEEKENDS)

AM
7.00 Weekend Mornings With Jason Dasey

Tides

SUN RISE/SET TIME: 7.17am/7.21pm
MOON RISE/SET TIME: 5.04am/5.24pm

TIDES TODAY: Singapore: 3.52am (1.8m), 9.33am (2.7m), 4.22pm (0.7m), 11.33pm (2.6m). Desaru: 3.52am (2m), 8.16am (2.3m), 3.31pm (0.9m), 11.15pm (2.7m). Port Dickson: 5.38am (2.3m), 12.37pm (0.8m), 6.07pm (2m). Mersing: 4.13am (2.1m), 7.18am (2.3m), 2.38pm (1.1m), 10.22pm (3.1m).

TIDES TOMORROW: Singapore: 4.31am (1.7m), 10.15am (2.8m), 4.54pm (0.6m). Desaru: 4.30am (1.9m), 9.07am (2.4m), 4.11pm (0.8m), 11.43pm (2.7m). Port Dickson: 12.15am (0.4m), 6.13am (2.4m), 1.13pm (0.7m), 6.43pm (2.2m). Mersing: 4.49am (2.1m), 8.22am (2.3m), 3.25pm (1m), 10.54pm (3.1m).

For updates and more details, call Meteorological Service Singapore, NEA, on 6542-7788 or go to www.nea.gov.sg

Park Bo-gum wants to enlist early in military

SEOUL • Mandatory military service in South Korea can affect the career momentum of an up-and-coming artist. This may explain why actor Park Bo-gum has expressed his desire to enlist early. The 25-year-old has chalked up impressive victories in the battle to win over fans in show business. Park, who recently finished shoot-

ing TV romantic comedy series Encounter, drew 5,000 people at the launch of his Asian fan-meeting tour in Seoul recently. He will meet 50,000 more fans when he makes stops in countries, including Japan, Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia. His appearance in Singapore is slated for March 9 at The Star The-

atre. Tickets from \$158 to \$228 are available from Apactix. The attendance tally is an impressive coup, given that he made his breakthrough a few years ago playing a gifted Go player in the hit TV series Reply 1988, which aired from late 2015 to early 2016. He followed that up with the 2016

period romance drama, Love In The Moonlight, which led to his becoming the youngest artist to be named Actor of the Year by Gallup Korea. In Encounter, he co-stars with Song Hye-kyo of 2016 mega-hit Descendants Of The Sun fame. But Park is not consumed entirely by the mission to be more famous.

According to lifestyle portal Soompi, he said: "I want to do a lot of work to enhance my value and invest a lot of time in the people I love. Travelling alone is not bad either. It would be fun to meet Koreans in an unfamiliar place. "I would also like to get a scuba diving certificate."



Park Bo-gum recently finished shooting romantic comedy series Encounter with co-star Song Hye-kyo. PHOTO: TVN

On social media

DONNIE'S GIRL: Like mother, like daughter. And action hero Donnie Yen – who is married to former model Cissy Wang, 37 – is now saying that his daughter Jasmine is a knockout, having landed a photo shoot in the Cosmopolitan HK magazine. "Daughter, @jasminyenofficial – amazing how time had flown by so quickly, you have become a young beautiful little woman already. "Thank you... for these gorgeous photos in her first HK Cosmopolitan feature," he posted online. But some netizens wonder if Jasmine, who is 15, is too young to preen for the cameras, noting that some of the poses seem suggestive. But others would have none of that negative talk, saying instead that it is commendable for her to be able to step out of her dad's famous shadow. Over the weekend, Yen, 55, also raved online over the participation of Jasmine and younger brother James at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts' annual Academy Ball. She sang while her brother played the piano. Naturally, dad and mum were present. PHOTO: DONNIE YEN/INSTAGRAM



Documentary on making of Beatles' Let It Be

WELLINGTON • Beatles fans can now twist and shout. Acclaimed Lord Of The Rings director Peter Jackson has said he is working on a documentary detailing the making of The Beatles' classic album Let It Be 50 years ago. The film is based on 55 hours of never-before-seen footage and 140 hours of audio from the Fab Four's recording sessions. Jackson said it provided an unprecedented insight into the band's creative process and the members' interactions in the studio. "It's like a time machine transports us back to 1969 and we get to sit in the studio watching these four friends make great music together." Let It Be was recorded in January 1969 but not released until May the following year after The Beatles put



The Beatles comprised (clockwise from top left) Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr, John Lennon and George Harrison. PHOTO: EMI SINGAPORE

out Abbey Road and subsequently split, making it the final album the band released. The footage was originally shot for a television special that never materialised. Fans have long believed the album's creation was marred by infighting that tore the band apart but Jackson said that was a myth. He added: "Watching John, Paul, George and Ringo work together,

creating now-classic songs from scratch, is not only fascinating – it's funny, uplifting and surprisingly intimate." The Beatles film is being made with the cooperation of surviving band members Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr, as well as the families of George Harrison and John Lennon. A release date has not been finalised. AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Two more musical numbers for Oscars

NEW YORK • As it turns out, the Oscars has something more to sing about. After Variety reported last week that the Feb 24 telecast would broadcast performances of only two of the five Original Song nominees, the academy tweeted that at least two more musical numbers would be added. I'll Fight, written by 10-time nomi-

nee Diane Warren and performed by Jennifer Hudson for the documentary RBG, will now reportedly appear on the broadcast – alongside performances of the Lady Gaga single Shallow from A Star Is Born and the Kendrick Lamar hit All The Stars from Black Panther. Though Emily Blunt performs the nominated song The Place Where

Lost Things Go in Mary Poppins Returns, the promise of a "surprise special guest" may indicate that someone may take her place at the Oscars. There is no word yet whether there will be room for the remaining song, When A Cowboy Trades His Spurs For Wings, from The Ballad Of Buster Scruggs. NYTIMES



Beyonce said she was going meatless on Mondays, while husband and rap mogul Jay-Z vowed two of his daily meals would be plant-based. PHOTO: REUTERS

Go vegan to win lifetime of free tickets to Beyonce, Jay-Z shows

NEW YORK • Step up to the plate and go vegan for a month. For doing just that, music's first couple Beyonce and Jay-Z have a tasty proposition – a contest that will give one winner a lifetime of free tickets to their shows. Queen Bey, who announced the challenge to her 123 million Instagram followers on Wednesday, said it was in support of the Greenprint Project that promotes adopting even a partial vegan diet to limit environmental footprints. Fans can sign up for the contest

online and one will be chosen at random to win a pair of tickets annually for 30 years to concerts by Beyonce and/or Jay-Z, an estimated retail value of US\$12,000 (S\$16,000). The star said she was going meatless on Mondays and eating plant-based breakfasts, while husband and rap mogul Jay-Z vowed two of his daily meals would be plant-based. Beyonce has been vocal about embracing veganism in the past, having adopted the diet prior to her

stunning May 2018 performance at the Coachella music festival one year after giving birth to twins. She is joined by fellow singers Miley Cyrus and Ariana Grande in promoting veganism, which prohibits consumption of all animal products, including meat, dairy items, eggs and honey. Research has shown that cutting meat and dairy products can boost the planet's health by reducing farmland use and planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions. AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

MeToo #1

Director charged with assaulting female crew member

TAIPEI • Acclaimed Taiwanese director Doze Niu has been charged with sexually assaulting a female crew member who was working on his latest film Pao Ma. In a statement announcing the charge, the Taipei District Prosecutors Office accused him of trying to avoid responsibility "by downplaying his actions and insinuating that the woman is partially to blame". He faces up to 10 years in prison if found guilty. The alleged assault occurred on Nov 24 following a meeting at his home in Taipei when other guests had left. A friend later accompanied the woman to a hospital and filed a police report. Niu, who spoke to reporters in December after he was questioned by police, said: "I have faith and hope that there will be a fair trial. "But there is another public trial going on now and I have already been handed a death sentence." The child actor-turned-director became famous when gangster film Monga won two Golden Horse Awards in 2010. Niu previously hit the headlines in 2014, when he was fined and handed a suspended sentence for taking a Chinese cinematographer to a naval base in Taiwan without authorisation to scout film locations for his movie Paradise In Service. Taiwan has a ban on Chinese nationals entering military facilities. AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

MeToo #2

Soprano claims she was molested by veteran conductor

PARIS • A soprano, who claims she was molested by veteran conductor Charles Dutoit, has condemned the French National Orchestra for hiring him for a concert tomorrow. Swiss-born Dutoit was hit by a flurry of allegations in 2017, with eight women accusing him of harassment and assault. He has now been called in at short notice to conduct the French National Orchestra in Berlioz's The Damnation Of Faust, after Emmanuel Krivine dropped out because of illness. The orchestra said it had consulted its musicians and soloists before taking the decision. But retired French singer Anne-Sophie Schmidt felt betrayed by the decision. "I am sickened that Dutoit has been hired... when eight artists across the world have had the courage to denounce him for sexual harassment," she said. "It is a knife in the back for those trying to stop violence against woman," she wrote on Facebook. Schmidt told the Journal de Montreal newspaper that Dutoit assaulted her in 1995. "He pushed me against a wall and forcibly kissed me," she said, claiming that similar things "have happened to lots of my colleagues". Several major orchestras had severed ties with Dutoit, 82, who stepped down from the Montreal Symphony Orchestra in 2002 after being accused of mental cruelty by musicians who said he had acted like a "tyrant". An internal inquiry into allegations of sexual harassment during his 25 years there closed in November, with the orchestra saying its findings were inconclusive. AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

life

MOTORING

D **SUPERB FUEL EFFICIENCY**
Infiniti's QX50 is first car here with a variable compression turbo engine
D12&13



SLEEK BABY MERC
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D16

Porsche 911 ups the ante

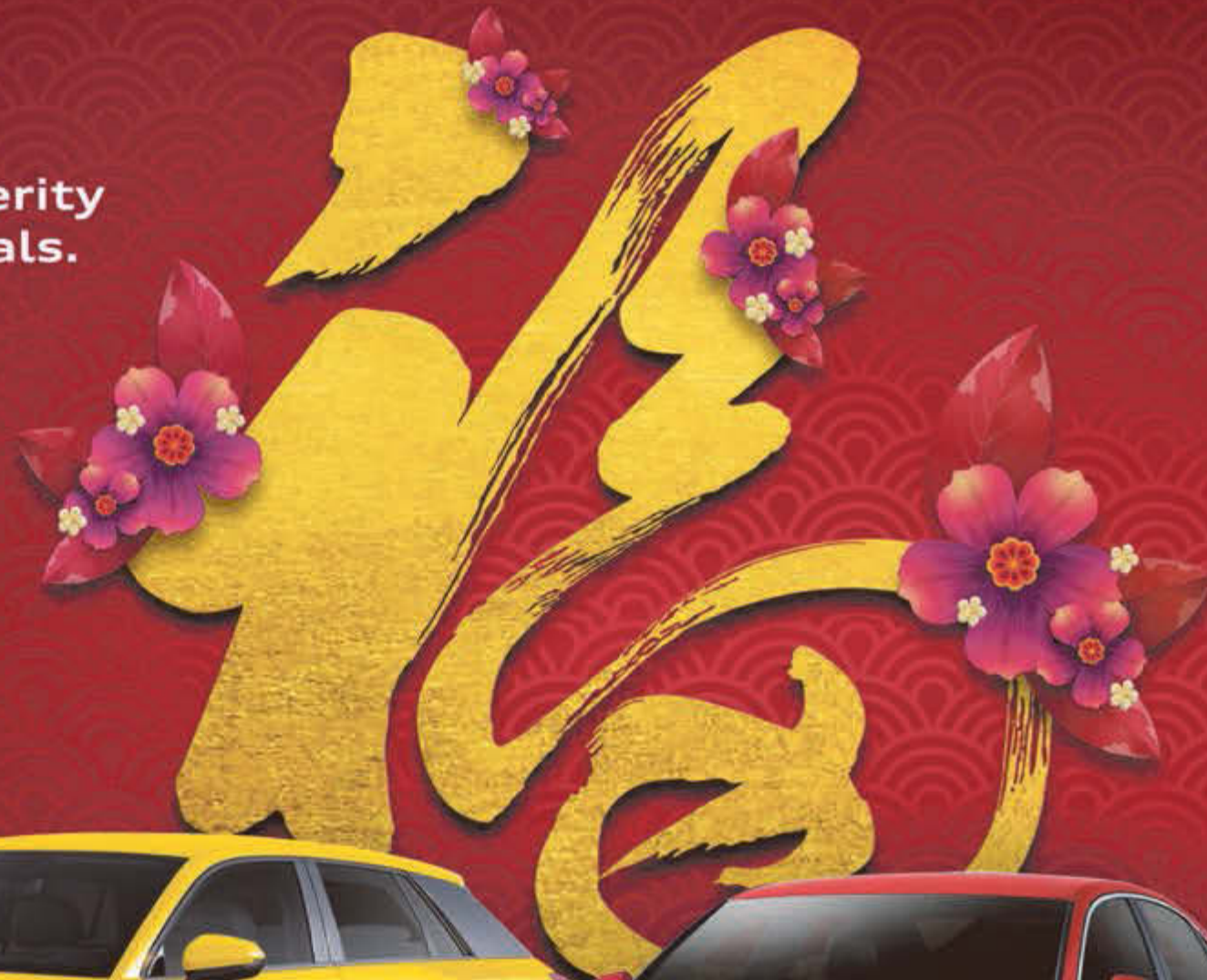
The latest iteration of this classic speedster looks indistinguishable from its predecessor, but there are significant changes. **Edric Pan** takes a closer look. **D10&11**



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On top of the usual electronic safety systems and driver aids, the Porsche 911 has a Wet mode, which will adjust throttle response and traction control settings to maximise stability when activated.



Eighth time's a charm

Porsche's iconic 911 gets even better the eighth time around

Edric Pan
In Valencia, Spain

While the eighth-generation Porsche 911, known internally as the 992, may seem barely distinguishable at first glance from its seventh-generation predecessor, a closer look reveals quite a few significant changes.

The fenders are more muscular, with the front pair slightly flared to conceal a front track that is 45mm wider than before. And at the back, all models in the range now sport the widebody rear (and wider rear track), which was previously re-

served for the all-wheel-drive and GT versions.

Wheels are now staggered, with 20-inch rims in front and 21-inch at the rear.

A 20mm stretch in the car's length – although the wheelbase remains unchanged – has made for a longer, sleeker rear fastback silhouette. The slightly higher-set tail is marked by a distinctive full-width horizontal LED light bar linking the slim tail lamps. Above this, a section of the rear end extends in two phases – at 90kmh and 150kmh respectively – as a spoiler to counter lift.

Increased use of aluminium has helped keep weight gain to just 20kg despite the car's growth in size and equipment list.

On the inside, the central dashboard air vents have migrated downwards, to make way for a 10.9-inch high-definition touchscreen which handles most sec-

ondary functions. But thankfully, climate and volume controls are still managed by physical dials and switches located just ahead of the gear lever.

The gear lever is now a stubby rectangular block, like an oversized toggle switch. And for the first time on a 911, there is keyless ignition – firing up the car involves turning a rotary lever next to the steering column, where you would previously have inserted the key.

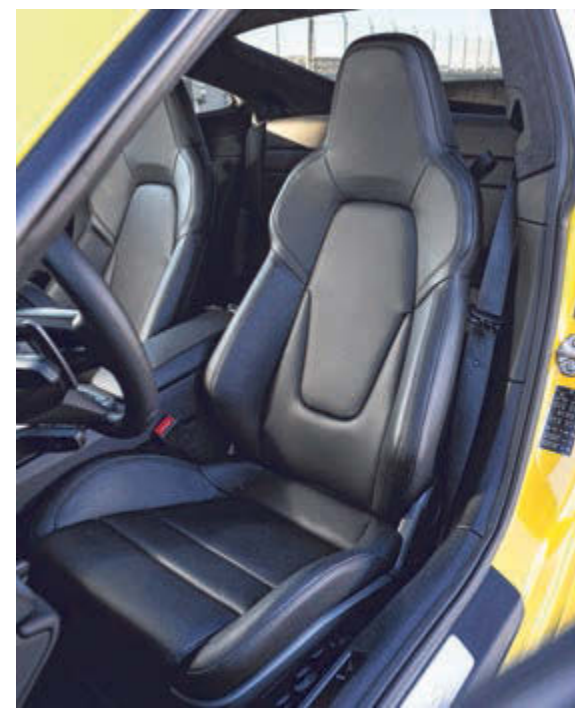
Apart from the usual host of electronic safety systems and driver aids, the new 911 has one more – the Wet mode. Acoustic sensors in the front wheel arches will detect wet surfaces, prompting the driver to activate the Wet mode. This will adjust throttle response and traction control settings to maximise stability. Clever stuff.

The only powertrain currently available is the one-above-base

model's version, which as before is a 3-litre twin-turbocharged flat-six. Major tweaks include larger, symmetrical turbochargers, intercoolers repositioned to immediately behind the air intakes rather than behind the rear wheels, a newly designed air intake layout and faster-acting injectors. Power is up by 30bhp to 444bhp, matching the output of previous 911 GTs.

The dual-clutch gearbox now has one more ratio, bringing the total to eight. Equipped with an optional Sport Chrono pack, the rear-wheel-driven Carrera 2S will hit 100kmh in 3.5 seconds, and a top speed of 308kmh. A seven-speed manual will also be available.

So the 911 has even more ferocious pace now, but is more civilised too. The car is more composed, soaking up bumps and ruts in almost saloon-like fashion, and road noise is better suppressed.



So too is engine noise, unless you choose the Sport mode, which opens a flap in the exhaust to let out more of that flat-six wail. And it makes a great aural accompaniment to the engine's delivery, which is immensely punchy yet beautifully linear from idle all the way to the 7,500 revolutions per minute redline.

The brake pedal is reassuringly firm and easily modulated and the brakes themselves – I had an optional carbon-ceramic on the test car – are immensely strong and fade-resistant, as proven on the brief track session.

The car corners better than ever. That wider front track makes for massive front grip, quelling the old car's slight understeer in tight bends and letting you dive into turns with far more commitment. And once into the bend, the weight of the engine sitting over the rear

wheels gives superb traction, allowing power to be applied as early as you dare.

On narrow, hilly roads, the car's optional rear-wheel steering is a godsend, swivelling the car so keenly that even the tightest hairpins are tackled without frenetic twirling of the steering wheel.

The steering is more meatily weighted than before and demands a firm grip down a twisty stretch. But there is also a wealth of feedback coursing through that leather rim to your palms.

The previous 911 was a gem, but Porsche has polished it further. There is a truly brilliant new car under that familiar shape.

stlife@sph.com.sg

• The writer contributes to Torque, a motoring monthly published by SPH Magazines.



For the first time on a Porsche 911, there is keyless ignition – firing up the car involves turning a rotary lever next to the steering column. PHOTOS: PORSCHE

SPECS/ PORSCHE 911 CARRERA 2S

Price: From \$546,588 without COE when it arrives in June
Engine: 2,981cc 24-valve flat-six turbocharged
Transmission: Eight-speed dual-clutch with paddleshift
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Torque: 530Nm at 2,300-5,000rpm
0-100kmh: 3.5 seconds
Top speed: 308kmh
Fuel consumption: 8.9 litres/100km
Agent: Stuttgart Auto

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Best of both worlds

The new Infiniti QX50 has a petrol engine which is almost as efficient as a diesel

Christopher Tan
Senior Correspondent

The Infiniti QX50 is the first car here to have a variable compression turbo engine, which promises the efficiency of a diesel and the punchiness of a petrol.

With the aid of an electric motor, a control shaft at the base of the engine rotates, influencing the angle of multi-link arms. This, in turn, changes the top dead-centre position of the pistons and thus the engine's compression ratios.

Depending on driving styles, the ratios vary between 8:1 and 14:1 to provide torque and efficiency respectively.



It involves a lot of moving parts. But surprisingly, the engine is among the smoothest 2-litre four-cylinders in the business, matching the creaminess of a bigger power plant with more cylinders.

Paired with a quick-acting continuously variable transmission, it delivers on its dual promise, albeit leaning towards performance.

Over the course of a three-day

test-drive, the QX50 averages 10.5 litres/100km. Not bad for an all-wheel-drive weighing nearly 1.9 tonnes – but not quite the 8.7 litres stated in its specifications.

The Infiniti is quicker than its 8.3-second century sprint suggests. Squeeze its throttle with conviction and the mid-size sport utility vehicle hurtles towards its steered direction with the relentlessness of a

charging elephant.

Steering response is sizzling, with a tautness which would not have been out of place in a hot hatch. Alas, the car's chassis is not tuned to optimise its torrential output nor its snappy steering. Its relative tallness and heft do not help.

Quick overtaking, as a result, can be slightly unnerving, with body

roll in equal measure as you turn out and back in. At higher speeds, this sensation can be a tad unsettling.

A shame really since the QX50 is built on a new platform. With large wheels set at the far corners of the body and wide tracks, it is set up for superior roadholding.

It also gives the car a long wheel-base which, combined with gener-

ous body width, translates to a roomy interior. The boot is also spacious and accessible.

Unfortunately, those large 20-inch wheels, shod with run-flat tyres, are a compromise to ride comfort. Road noise is higher than expected.

On the whole, the car is not as refined as, say, the Lexus NX or the RX. Size-wise, it is closer to the NX,

but weight-wise, it is more similar to the bigger RX.

Poorer insulation and ride aside, the car betrays other minor short-falls, which prevent it from being a strong rival to Lexus' SUVs.

Its Hold function is sticky and requires plenty of throttle input to release. It has a suede-lined centre console and rubber-lined cubby holes, but also plastic bits and a

manual roller cover for a storage compartment fore of the gear lever.

The gear lever has a stylish, sporty design which is similar to what you find in modern Mers, but has a flimsy tactile feel to it.

Its digital displays lack the sophistication expected of a premium product. In fact, its instrumentation is only partially digital.

Yet, credit must be given to In-

finiti for giving the world a new engine technology which holds vast potential. Most other manufacturers are expending resources on cool infotainment systems.

The engine should be a blast in a lighter model with better road dynamics – like the Q60.

christan@sph.com.sg

TorqueShop

There is a viral video going around on how a new tyre can already be past its sell-by date and, therefore, be dangerous to fit on a car. How true is this? If so, how serious are the consequences?

While the video is an illustration of an extreme situation, it is nonetheless important to be aware of a tyre's deterioration over time – even when it is new and unused.

The rubber compound used in tyres experiences gradual, natural degradation. This phenomenon continues whether or not the tyres are fitted to a vehicle that is in regular use.

Hence, even brand new tyres that are shelved in a warehouse or tyre retailer's store will deteriorate over time. After several years on the shelf, the changing characteristics of the compound will cause the rubber to lose its pliability. Tiny cracks will also begin to form. When such tyres are fitted to a vehicle, the compound's diminished integrity and flexibility will, in most cases, lead to sudden side-wall failure or tread delamination – layers of rubber peeling off when rolling.

However, it would take some four years or more before any tyre begins to develop such a change in its characteristics. Most tyre shops would not hold on to stock for that long.

On the other hand, you may come across someone who has kept a set of branded tyres, but no longer has a need for them. In such instances, you must check the age of the tyre.

You can also verify the tyre's age by looking for a four-digit mark on the side-wall. You will find it on every tyre and it identifies the week and year of its manufacture. For example, "4717" means it was produced on the 47th week of the year 2017.

Shreejit Changaroth

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With its cushy seats, generous footwell and driver-centric cockpit, the BMW X4 is ideal for long hauls. ST PHOTOS: CHONG JUN LIANG

A league of its own

BMW's second-generation X4 is sleeker, quicker and more refined

Christopher Tan
Senior Correspondent

People who say sport utility vehicles (SUVs) and driving pleasure should not be used in the same sentence have not driven the new BMW X4.

Sitting wide and low, the smaller, younger and prettier version of the X6 "coupe-SUV" has a natural affinity for the tarmac.

And in BMW fashion, its chassis exudes poise, balance and coherence – traits which remain quite apparent despite the car's crossover profile. On the go, it tracks flawlessly, with tidy body movements

and a performance-biased blend of ride and handling.

It is not as lightfooted nor as agile as a BMW sedan or coupe, but it is streets ahead of most SUVs.

Of course, you might ask if the X4 is really an SUV or a fastback with a slightly higher ceiling and better ground clearance.

Either way, there is no denying the X4 xDrive30i's abilities and prowess. Propulsion comes from a 2-litre turbo churning out 252hp and 350Nm. Channelled through an eight-speed autobox to all four wheels, the output translates to progress which is as swift as it is smooth.

While it may not seem as blistering as its 6.3-second sprint implies, the X4 has an enormous stamina. Power delivery is very linear across a wide rev band. You hardly detect the surge and lag associated with many turbos.

Its immense power comes at a price, though. Fuel consumption is about 50 per cent higher than BMW's declared 7.8 litres/100km.

But for fans, that may well be par for the course.

The ride is firm and slightly jiggly over protrusions, but not entirely uncomfortable. At higher speeds, the chassis has an amicable frequency.

Together with its cushy seats, generous footwell and driver-centric cockpit, the X4 is ideal for long hauls.

Excellent insulation helps to keep fatigue at bay too.

Fit and finish is now clearly better than when the first American-made X-cars arrived two decades ago.

Still, there are tiny things that have escaped attention, such as sharp edges around door handles, and an extremely sticky roller cover for a centre console compartment, requiring both hands to open.

And though the boot is fairly sizeable, its opening is surprisingly narrow.

The car has a more dynamic design, with headlights made slimmer with LED tech and an almost Italian



rear end. Quite sexy, even for an SUV.

The second-generation X4 is bigger than its predecessor, with growth most obvious in its length, width and wheelbase. Yet it is sleeker, with better wind-cheating properties.

It has more modern features, such as wireless smartphone charging, phone pairing (BMW Connected), automatic parking for perpendicular and parallel spaces, and drive mode selection as well as customisation.

All fine and well, but the properties which define the X4 are still very much related to the way it drives. On that score, this SUV is in a league of its own.

christan@sph.com.sg

SPECS / BMW X4 xDRIVE30i	
Price:	\$267,888 with COE
Engine:	1,998cc 16-valve inline-4 turbocharged
Power:	252hp at 5,200rpm
Torque:	350Nm at 1,450-4,800rpm
Transmission:	Eight-speed automatic with paddle shift
0-100km/h:	6.3 seconds
Top speed:	240km/h
Fuel consumption:	7.8 litres/100km
Agent:	Performance Munich

Ex-Nissan CEO Carlos Ghosn says he is victim of 'plot and treason'

TOKYO • Carlos Ghosn, the embattled auto executive indicted on charges of financial wrongdoing, has said he was the victim of "plot and treason" by other Nissan leaders who wanted to thwart his plans to bring the automaker closer to its alliance partners, Renault of France and Mitsubishi Motors of Japan.

In an interview with Nikkei Asian Review on Wednesday, his first since he was arrested on Nov 19 last year, he blamed rivals at Nissan for misrepresenting facts to prosecutors and removing him as chairman of the company he helped rescue nearly two decades ago. He said that he had wanted to unite the three alliance partners in "autonomy under one holding company".

"People translated strong leadership to dictator, to distort reality" for the "purpose of getting rid of me", he said.

Prosecutors, who have been questioning Ghosn for more than two months, have charged him with underreporting US\$80 million (S\$109 million) in income to the Japanese financial authorities and temporarily transferring personal losses to Nissan's books. He has spent more than 70 days in jail and been refused bail twice.

In a court appearance last month, he said he was innocent of all charges. He also promised to surrender his passports and pay for a private apartment, security guards and an ankle bracelet in order to be released while under investigation. The court deemed the 64-year-old

millionaire a flight risk.

In the interview with Nikkei, which has deep ties to the business establishment in Japan, Ghosn said he had a "plan to integrate" Renault, Nissan and Mitsubishi Motors and had shared those plans with Mr Hiroto Saikawa, Nissan's chief executive, in September.

The alliance of Nissan, Renault and Mitsubishi is an industry juggernaut, accounting for more than 10 million car sales annually. The Nissan and Mitsubishi boards removed Ghosn as chairman shortly after his arrest. He resigned as chairman and chief executive of Renault last week.

Since then, Nissan itself has been indicted on charges of financial misconduct by Japanese prosecutors in relation to the Ghosn case; the US Securities and Exchange Commission has also questioned Nissan.

The Nikkei interview was notable for Ghosn's methodical attempt to address some of the big questions – and speculation – about his financial dealings with the carmaker.

There have been steady leaks to the news media about his housing, personal finances and salary, and about whether he correctly reported his earnings to the financial authorities for several years.

Ghosn told the Nikkei reporters that he denied accusations that he had improperly funnelled US\$14.7 million in payments to a company run by a Saudi businessman, Mr Khaled Al-Juffali, whom he described in his court appearance last

month as a "partner" of Nissan's in the Persian Gulf region.

Prosecutors are investigating accusations that Nissan funds were used to pay Mr Al-Juffali to provide collateral for Ghosn's personal paper losses of more than US\$16 million, incurred on foreign exchange investments after the 2008 financial crisis.

In an earlier statement to the court, Ghosn said that Nissan had paid Mr Al-Juffali for services to Nissan in the Middle East. In the Nikkei interview, he said "the executive in charge of the region signed" off on the payment.

Nissan spokesman Nicholas Maxfield said the company had "already acknowledged severe problems with its governance as a company".

He added: "We can't comment on the specifics of Nissan's internal investigation."

In the Nikkei interview, Ghosn denied accusations that he had improperly bought luxury homes through a Nissan affiliate, and said Nissan had approved the purchases.

"Hari Nada has done all this," he said, referring to a senior vice-president of Nissan.

He described as a "distortion of reality" reports that he had improperly received a payment of €7.8 million (S\$12 million) from a Netherlands-based joint venture between Nissan and Mitsubishi. He said the venture had been set up for "synergy and not for payment".

Ghosn's interview corresponds



Former Nissan chief executive officer and former Renault-Nissan Alliance chairman and CEO Carlos Ghosn, with his wife Carole (both left) at the 70th Cannes Film Festival in 2017, has spent more than 70 days in jail and been refused bail twice. PHOTO: REUTERS

with statements from his family members who have said that they believe Mr Saikawa orchestrated a coup against him.

In an interview with the French business daily Les Echos last month, Mr Saikawa dismissed reports that Nissan had organised a plot to oust Ghosn as "absurd", and contrary to the "serious" evidence that he said the company had gathered. He said Nissan's internal investigation into possible financial misconduct by Ghosn and his close associate, board member Greg Kelly, "suggests that we are dealing with deliberate manipulation and concealment".

Corporate governance experts have questioned how Ghosn could have acted on his own and without knowledge of other board directors. The Nikkei interview does not fully address that.

"He refers to approvals by various parties, but not one of them is on the board of directors," said Mr Nicholas Benes of The Board Director Training Institute of Japan, a non-profit group that focuses on corporate governance.

"This is strange and begs to be explained," he said. "I would like to know what each director knew, and when did they know it."

NYTIMES

FastLane



Renault Clio to arrive in Singapore this year

The new Clio (above) will be Renault's first hybrid model. Renault says it showcases its E-Tech system, developed in-house, which is said to make use of two motors mounted in a series between the engine and the transmission – one for starting and the other for propulsion.

The car has all-LED headlights, a 9.3-inch vertical multimedia screen and a 10-inch thin-film transistor digital instrument binnacle. It comes in 10 exterior colours. Built on a new platform, the car is slated to land in Singapore in the third quarter of the year as a 1-litre turbo. The hybrid variant may not arrive until 2021.



Jaguar Land Rover paves the way for self-driving cars

Jaguar Land Rover has developed a system (left) that projects the direction of travel onto the road ahead of self-driving vehicles, to tell other road users what a vehicle is going to do next.

The intelligent technology beams a series of projections onto the road to show the intentions of the vehicle – for example, stopping and turning left or right – as part of research into how people can develop their trust in autonomous technology.

In the future, the projections could even be used to share obstacle detection and journey updates with pedestrians.

Sounds good. If only this could be applied to existing human-driven cars now.



Skoda Kamiq unveiled in drawing

Here is the first sketch of the new Skoda Kamiq (left). The compact urban crossover has a relatively high ground clearance and features split headlights with daytime-running LEDs – a first for the brand.

It has a wide, upright radiator grille, which comes with double slats – typical of Skoda sport utility vehicles.

A silver-colour front spoiler underscores the model's off-road looks. The Kamiq will also be the first Skoda to have dynamic indicators.

Lotus and Williams team up to develop new powertrain technology

Lotus and Williams Advanced Engineering have entered a strategic technical partnership to share research and development into advanced propulsion technologies.

Lotus Engineering has extensive expertise in the integration and application of new technologies – for Lotus Cars and other engineering clients. Williams has experience across the automotive sector and beyond, as well as knowledge derived from four seasons of Formula E.

Groupe PSA to start testing autonomous cars in China

France's Groupe PSA has obtained a licence to start autonomous driving tests on open roads in Chongqing, China.

Groupe PSA is the first car manufacturer to have tested autonomous cars on open roads in France, from July 2015, as well as the first carmaker to obtain permission to carry out such tests with "non-expert" drivers in March 2017.

It said the challenge is to integrate its technology into the Chinese ecosystem "since the environment, infrastructure, map system and road users are different".



Koenigsegg, China's Nevs team up to make electric cars

Swedish supercar maker Koenigsegg has teamed up with Saab's Chinese successor to go electric. Reuters reported that National Electric Vehicle Sweden (Nevs), a Chinese-backed company born from the remnants of bankrupt Saab, is investing €150 million (\$231 million) in a venture with Koenigsegg to develop electric models.

Nevs, in which China's Evergrande Health recently became the majority investor, said it would take a 65 per cent stake in a new joint venture. Koenigsegg will hold the rest and contribute intellectual property, technology licences and product design. The deal deepens China's exposure to Swedish automakers, with Geely owning Volvo Cars.

A Koenigsegg RS1 at the 2017 New York International Auto Show in New York. PHOTO: JAGUAR LAND ROVER, RENAULT, REUTERS, SKODA

Christopher Tan

Standing out from the crowd



The Mercedes-Benz A-class is a low-slung hatchback with sharp styling and modern features.
ST PHOTO: CHONG JUN LIANG

The new Mercedes-Benz A-class is a competent hatch and a refreshing break from the norm

Christopher Tan
Senior Correspondent

The Mercedes-Benz A-class started life as a tall micro-multipurpose vehicle because being a hatch would have been so predictable. The car packed a lot of room, but not a lot of vroom.

By its third iteration, it had evolved into a regular hatchback – but in a hurried way and not just because you still see the “tall boy” symbol on its recirculation button.

But now, the transformation is complete and with flourish. The latest A-class is a low-slung hatchback with sharp styling and modern features. And it is more than capable of stealing customers from the Volkswagen Golf or even the Golf GTI.

Compared with the previous model, the new car is appreciably longer and slightly wider and sits a wee bit lower. Together with a stretched-out wheelbase, it has a much sleeker profile, accentuated by clean styling.

It is also visibly sportier than before, with larger wheel arches and bigger wheels.

Inside, the car’s youthful theme

continues. A sweeping tablet-style display incorporates both driving gauges and infotainment controls – an industry first.

The bold move works well, with high-definition graphics which are uber-cool to look at and, yet, very functional.

A mini touch pad on the centre console next to the gear lever lets you scroll and click with little effort. Working the navigation, for instance, is a cinch, compared with those in many recent Mercs. The system is intuitive, predictive and not at all jumpy.

The car gets a single-zone climate control, with vents shaped like jet turbines, adding to the interior cool quotient. Although once, it failed to deliver cool temperatures.

The interior is furnished with a wonderful mix of chic and luxe, and finished with a quality surpassing what you see in the C-class.

The way it drives further underscores the car’s youthfulness. Although powered by a modest 1.3-litre engine, the A200 AMG Line test-car has a decent output of 163hp and 250Nm. Roughly 20kg lighter than its predecessor, it scores an 8sec century sprint and a peak velocity of 225kmh.

While not exactly blistering on paper, the performance is adequately entertaining on the road. It has a hair-trigger throttle which, at the slightest provocation, summons up the engine’s full stable of horses.



The response is far from linear, yet provides lots of laughs. With revs shooting past 3,000rpm in the blink of an eye, and the exhaust making like ten thousand angry hornets trapped in a biscuit tin, the car attacks the tarmac with zest.

Whatever the car lacks in stop-watch credentials, it makes up for with buckets of enthusiasm.

Supported by a sturdy steering and a sound chassis, progress feels swift and safe. The paddles help you get in gear for cornering, which the car executes with as much acumen as its shorter-wheelbased predecessor.

Ride quality is also better, which is a good thing. There is nothing which spoils the fun like a poorly

sorted suspension. The front seats are sporty yet comfy.

It has a fairly decent fuel economy of 8.5 litres/100km, even if that is nowhere near the stated 5.6 litres.

The car scores high on visual appeal, cockpit interface and drive-ability. At the same time, it comes across as decidedly coarse and unapologetically vocal – but that is part of its charm.

Brashness, after all, is an excusable trait of youth. In this case, it also sets the A-class apart from the sea of bland and increasingly homogeneous cars.

christan@sph.com.sg

SPECS / MERCEDES-BENZ A200 AMG LINE

Price:	\$158,888 with COE
Engine:	1,332cc 16-valve inline-4 turbocharged
Transmission:	Seven-speed dual-clutch with paddle shift
Power:	163hp at 5,500rpm
Torque:	250Nm at 1,620rpm
0-100kmh:	8 seconds
Top speed:	225kmh
Fuel consumption:	5.6 litres/100km
Agent:	Cycle & Carriage

Meet Tesla’s newly minted millennial CFO

NEW YORK • Mr Zach Kirkhorn landed his first job out of school with McKinsey & Co and joined Tesla while still in his mid-20s. He is about to take over a finance department that has been through months of tumult.

Mr Kirkhorn, 34, will become chief financial officer of the electric-car maker after a few months more grooming by his predecessor, Mr Deepak Ahuja.

Chief executive officer Elon Musk revealed the shake-up in the closing minutes of Tesla’s earnings called on Wednesday and the surprise announcement sent the shares tumbling as much as 5.9 per cent.

Tesla saw a wave of executive departures last year that hit the finance team particularly hard. Chief accounting officer Dave Morton resigned in September after less than a month. Mr Justin McAnear, vice-president of worldwide finance, left in October.

Mr Ahuja, 56, retired in 2015 but returned in 2017 when his successor, Mr Jason Wheeler, announced he

had quit after just 15 months. He plans to go back into retirement after a few months and continue to serve as a senior adviser, probably for several years, according to Mr Musk.

The CEO joked on the call that he did not think the few years Mr Kirkhorn spent at Harvard Business School were necessary – he earned his MBA in 2013. While he will rank among the youngest CFOs at major United States companies, he has a few years on Mr David Knopf, who took over the role for Kraft Heinz at 29 in 2017.

“Zach’s incredibly talented and has made a huge contribution to Tesla over the years,” Mr Musk said, adding that his new CFO was “a very well-known quantity to the whole team and has the respect of the whole team”.

Tesla shares were already trading lower before the CFO announcement. While the company came up short of analysts’ estimates for fourth-quarter profit, it posted US\$910 million (\$S1,228 million) in



free cash flow. Mr Musk also assured investors Tesla will be able to “comfortably” pay off US\$920 million worth of convertible bonds maturing next month.

“I feel we’re starting 2019 with a very strong financial foundation,” Mr Kirkhorn said.

“We have enough cash to continue launching new programmes and developing new technologies, and we’re able to service upcoming debt obligations with our forecasted cash flows.”

BLOOMBERG

Mr Zach Kirkhorn, who joined McKinsey & Co fresh out of school and Tesla in his mid-20s, is the electric-car maker’s incoming chief financial officer.

PHOTO: TESLA

Is the BMW 3-series the ultimate driving machine?



The spotlight falls on BMW’s new 3-series this month. The car is brimming with new tech and features. But does it still deserve to be called an “ultimate driving machine”?

February’s Torque has plenty for sport utility vehicle (SUV) lovers too. The Porsche Cayenne S, Maserati Levante S and Jaguar F-Pace go head to head in a premium crossover shootout. This epic group test aside, look out for an in-depth review of Audi’s Q8.

A little farther down the line, check out the Karoq, the newest crossover from clever Czech manufacturer Skoda.

If SUVs are not your cup of tea, then read about a 1,500km road trip – in a Porsche Cayman 718, no less.

Torque, out at newsstands now.

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Bouncing back to help others



Being retrenched can be a traumatic experience for many, especially if you have worked in the same career for many years. Getting back on your feet and regaining self-esteem and self-confidence to find work again can be an emotionally draining journey.

But many people have got back on their feet after retrenchment and found new and fulfilling careers and their stories inspire others to keep trying and hoping for breakthroughs.

Read the story about one person who not only got back on his feet after being retrenched, but turned his experiences into teaching points as he coaches others through their life journeys.

Photos: iStock

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Culinary & Hospitality

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 - Food & Beverage
 - Hospitality Operations

Design & Media

 - Architectural Technology
 - Film Making
 - Interactive Design
 - Performance Production

- Electronics & Info-comm Technology**

 - Business Information Systems
 - Cyber & Network Security
 - Internet of Things (IoT) & Communication
 - IT Applications Development
 - IT Systems & Networks
 - Microelectronics

Engineering

 - Automotive Engineering
 - Building Information Modelling (BIM) Application
 - Electrical Engineering - Lighting & Sound
 - Mechanical & Electrical Services Supervision
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 - Mechatronics Engineering
 - Precision Engineering
 - Vertical Transportation

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From being retrenched to helping those who are retrenched

After he was retrenched in 1997, Mt James Wong, 66, had no idea he would end up working as a Career Coach with Workforce Singapore (WSG).

Reminiscing on his past career journey, James shared that he had a comfortable life back then as the regional Management Information System manager of a multi-national company (MNC).

But at the height of the Asian financial crisis in 1997, Mr Wong, then 49, was retrenched after more than 20 years in the IT industry.

As jobs were hard to come by in the IT industry, James grabbed any opportunity that came his way.

He not only gained working experience in the security industry but the facilities management industry as well as a cleaning supervisor.

It was when he got a job as a Career Coach that he discovered that he could put his previous career experiences to good use by helping others.

Mr Wong shared: "A majority of the retrenched jobseekers I encounter are older and think that employers do not want to hire them because of their age. This mindset is an obstacle and we need to change that."

Although every jobseeker has their own unique career journey, Mr Wong had previously experienced problems similar to that his clients now face.

He reflected: "After my retrenchment, getting another job at 49 was quite challenging so I definitely understand what they are going through. I have to regularly remind jobseekers to keep an open mind on any opportunity that comes by, even though they may have some hesitation to take on new job scopes."

He regularly shares his experience with jobseekers on how, after his retrenchment, he ventured into unfamiliar industries like security and facilities management, held temporary jobs and took huge pay cuts from what he used to earn as a regional manager in order to keep himself active while searching for his new career direction, before he found his new calling as a Career Coach.

Using his experience as a starting point, Mr Wong helped jobseekers overcome their fears, coached and guided them, and thus accelerated their progress in seeking employment.

James recalled Mr Tan* (his name has been changed to protect his identity), a 50-year-old Quality Assurance Manager who was retrenched.

Mr Tan was unemployed for close to a year, and his finances were stretched thin with his mounting mortgage.

Anxious about the lack of progress in his job search, he was initially reluctant to accept James's advice and feedback.

"I could empathise with the pressure that Mr Tan felt as my youngest son was only four when I was retrenched, and I was so worried that I couldn't provide for my family without a job," Mr Wong said.

Mr Wong recognised the need to show Mr Tan his commitment in helping him.

"Based on my own experience after retrenchment, I knew that job referrals were vital to improving one's chances of getting hired."

Mr Wong explored avenues such as Career Fairs and Jobs Bank to connect with employers, making numerous job referrals for Mr Tan to increase his employment opportunities. Mr Tan was very positive and realistic in his salary expectations.

Although the progress was slow, Mr Wong continued to encourage and motivate Mr Tan.

Mr Wong also took pains to help Mr Tan with his appearance, showing him how he should smile more, how he should present himself to look more approachable, and how to make a good first impression.

He shared with Mr Tan that employers look for more than just technical knowledge in their candidates.

Mr Wong also guided Mr Tan on soft skills such as how to improve his interaction skills to establish stronger rapport and connection with potential interviewers.

He offered Mr Tan key interview tips that he had



careers
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overlooked on his post-retrenchment job search.

These included demonstrating positive body language by not slouching, maintaining eye contact, and being less anxious, as that could make him seem less warm and assertive.

Mr Wong also seized opportunities to relate his life experiences to Mr Tan, hoping that it would provide him the inspiration to overcome the hurdles he faced.

He shared: "Sometimes, people need to know that there are others in similar or worse-off situations in order to realise that their situation is not that bad."

With Mr Wong's support, Mr Tan started to regain his confidence, became more proactive in his job search and secured an administrative job at the Ministry of Education by tapping on his network of contacts.

"The greatest satisfaction I get from my job is seeing clients get employed and moving on with life," said Mr Wong when asked what keeps him motivated as a Career Coach.

Due to his experience with retrenchment, Mr Wong finds himself to be in a better position to advise others in a similar position as he was.

He said, "I am a good example to show retrenched jobseekers that it is not just about having the hard skills for a job. You also need to

adjust your expectations and keep an open mind. More importantly, I want them to know that they are not alone on this journey and to not lose hope."

Get more tips, logon <http://bit.ly/readmcfefb>

This article was contributed by Workforce Singapore.

The Adapt and Grow initiative aims to help Singaporeans adapt to changing job demands and grow their skills.

Careers Connect and NTUC's e2i centres provide career guidance and advisory to Singaporeans at various stages of their career. Individuals may visit www.wsg.gov.sg/careermatching or contact 6883 5885 (Workforce Singapore) or 6474 0606 (NTUC's e2i centres) for more information.

Workforce Singapore promotes the development, competitiveness, inclusiveness, and employability of all levels of the workforce. Its key mission is to enable Singaporeans to meet their career aspirations, take on quality jobs at different stages of life, and help enterprises be competitive and manpower-lean.

Workforce Singapore's focus is on strengthening the Singaporean core and ensuring that Singaporeans are able to have better jobs and careers.

Workforce Singapore, in partnership with key stakeholders, also provides support to business owners and companies to enable them to adapt and grow, while building a future-ready workforce.

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER: WWF SINGAPORE

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Read more about his story at: bit.ly/shafie1

CAREER EVENTS

9 FEB

Career Preview for Allied Health Professionals
8:30am - 1pm, SIT @ Dover, Main Auditorium
10 Dover Drive, Singapore 138683
Looking to switch careers? Speak to sponsoring employers about the training, funding support and career pathways of an Allied Health Professional.

Participating Employers:
Khoo Teck Puat Hospital • Sengkang Hospital • Singhealth Community Hospital • St Luke's Hospital • Vanguard Healthcare

Positions Available:
Diagnostic Radiographer • Occupational Therapist • Physiotherapist

Register now: bit.ly/allied2

21-22 FEB

Careers @ Jewel Changi Airport
10am - 6pm, Our Tampines Hub, Level 1 (Festive Plaza)
1 Tampines Walk, Singapore 528523
More than 50 employers offering close to 600 jobs in F&B, Retail and Security sectors.

21st Feb 2019
Participating Employers:
A&W • Chye Thiam Maintenance Pte Ltd • Uniqlo Singapore Pte Ltd

Positions Available:
Crew Member • Indoor Cleaning Crew • Restaurant Assistant Manager • Retail Associate

22nd Feb 2019
Participating Employers:
Muji (Singapore) Pte Ltd • Paris Baguette Pte Ltd • Tim Ho Wan

Positions Available:
Cook • Interior Advisor (Household) • Restaurant Manager / Assistant Manager • Retail Assistant / Cashier

Register now: bit.ly/jeweljobs

WALK-IN INTERVIEWS

19 FEB

Environmental Services & Security Sectors
1pm - 4pm
WSG Careers Connect (Our Tampines Hub)
Participating Companies:
Mini Environment Service Pte Ltd • Pico Guards Pte Ltd

Positions Available:
Cleaner • Security Officer • Senior Security Officer

Register now: bit.ly/walkin2

21 FEB

Manufacturing & Marketing Sectors
1pm - 4pm
WSG Careers Connect (WCC)
Participating Companies:
NTS Components Singapore Pte Ltd • Odazit Pte Ltd

Positions Available:
Marketing Officer • Marketing Strategy Manager • QC Inspector • Spray Painter • Technical Specialist

Register now: bit.ly/walkin3

27 FEB

Community Career Fair @ Yishun
10am - 4pm, Nee Soon East CC, Multipurpose Hall
1 Yishun Ave 9, Singapore 768893

Participating Employers:
Food Paradise Enterprise Pte Ltd • Lian Hin Pte Ltd • SMRT Buses Ltd • Thermo Fisher Scientific Pte Ltd • The Golden Duck Pte Ltd and more!

Positions Available:
Kitchen Assistant • Manufacturing Technician • Operations Manager / Executive • Sales & Admin Coordinator • Warehouse Assistant and more!

Register now: bit.ly/yishunjobs

1-2 MAR

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SCHOLARS' CHOICE II



Ms Ashwathy follows her heart to live her passion in passion.
PHOTO: TED CHEN

Turning her passion into a profession

Ms Ashwathy S. Kumar wants to fulfil her potential to excel in the culinary world

BY JOSHUA WONG

People seldom discover their passion through a mistake, yet it was precisely that which set Ms Ashwathy S. Kumar down her current path.

Instead of putting her off baking, her failed attempt at baking a cake in secondary school galvanised her to think deeply about what had gone wrong and explore how she could do better. With every subsequent baking attempt, she learnt something new — and it was then that she realised baking is her passion.

The 21-year-old has not looked back since that moment of self-discovery.

When she gave up the traditional paper chase to pursue baking, her family and friends initially questioned her decision — especially since she had attained the grades to study something more “appropriate” to them.

Nevertheless, she decided to follow her heart.

After completing a diploma in culinary and catering management at Temasek Polytechnic, she started an online business, Milestones, to sell baked goods. She is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Business Administration in Food Business Management (Baking and Pastry Arts) with the Culinary Institute of America at the Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT).

“Baking has given me true fulfilment and joy, and has allowed me to inspire those around me to pursue their dreams,” she says.

The path less travelled

During and after her time in polytechnic, she did internships with Singapore Marriott Tang Plaza Hotel and Winifred Kriste Cake, a small cake decorating company.

Although exhausting, these experiences taught her much. She was particularly inspired by Ms Winifred Lua, her boss at Winifred Kriste Cake, who worked tirelessly and with perseverance to start her own business and make it successful.

This inspired Ms Ashwathy to persevere through the long and tiring working hours.

“The difficulties I faced strengthened my resolve to work in this industry. While there was much I had to give up, this is the time when I can develop my character and skill set before I enter higher platforms of influence,” she says.

Developing her skill set

Yet she is aware that passion needs to be accompanied by competence if it is to bear fruit — hence her decision to pursue a degree at SIT. While she has a lot of practical baking experience, she believes it is important to also learn the proper fundamentals and techniques of the craft.

She applied for, and received, the SIT Scholarship last year after a rigorous application process involving thousands of applicants.

The scholarship covers her tuition fees fully and gave her the confidence to step up to assume leadership roles in school. It helps that there are people who believe in her and have invested resources to develop her potential.

For example, she organises events and activities for her course mates in conjunction with SIT as a member of the Student Management Committee.

In future, Ms Ashwathy hopes to be mentored by other pastry chefs to learn their business practices and improve her skill set, and eventually to open own café.

She says: “You do not have to be academically smart to succeed in life. We are each gifted in our own unique ways, and we should tap and develop those gifts to reach our full potential.”



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SCHOLARS' CHOICE II

Being in the PBL track has helped me to deepen my knowledge of the financial markets, taught me to think critically and enabled me to spot trends in the ever-changing economy

MR KHAIRUL ASYRAF KHAN
NTU-USP



PHOTO: TED CHEN

Making business sense

He once wanted to be a doctor, but Nanyang Technological University scholar Khairul Asyraf Khan Surattee is now discovering the world of finance with enthusiasm

BY NIVANI ELANGOVAN

Opting for a business degree with no prior interest in the field is a bold move to make, and one that Mr Khairul Asyraf Khan Surattee made anyway.

"Truth be told, I didn't intend to major in accountancy or business. I wanted to study medicine," Mr Surattee explains. "However, when I didn't get into the course, I decided to enrol in the Nanyang Business School."

Currently pursuing a double degree in accountancy and business with a specialisation in banking and finance with Platform-Based Learning (PBL), Mr Surattee is also in the Nanyang Technological University-University Scholars Programme (NTU-USP), an intellectually stimulating environment for him and fellow scholars.

"I have developed an interest in financial markets, and how they significantly impact our world," he says.

"It has showed me how different factors like politics, technological development and even the environment can affect the way consumers spend their money these days."

Diving right in

The PBL track, in particular, trains graduates to be desk-ready in high-value added sectors in financial services such as asset and wealth management, and capital markets.

"Going through the PBL track is the main reason why I developed a keen interest in the financial markets. I really hope to go the distance to perform well in the finance industry," he says.

"In addition, the group projects that I participated in on the PBL track helped me gain

valuable friends in NTU."

To complement this hands-on experience, Mr Surattee underwent an 11-week internship as a financial analyst at The Schindler Group, a leading global provider of lifts, escalators and related services. He had to analyse the company's financial and project expenses and revenues using financial models.

"I had to learn about the lift industry to predict various factors that could affect contract prices offered to our clients," he says.

An unforgettable overseas experience

The immersive learning is not the preserve of the PBL track; as part of the NTU-USP's Travel Overseas Programme for Scholars (Tops), an exclusive initiative, Mr Surattee travelled to Hanoi and Sapa in Vietnam for an in-depth appreciation of the country's multi-disciplinary issues.

Along with exposing them to other environments, scholars apply classroom techniques in real-life situations, such as managing and conducting fieldwork, visual documentation and telling a story about the project.

Says Mr Surattee: "Tops was very enjoyable. I had the opportunity to learn Vietnam's culture, and had fun while carrying out fieldwork and research activities."

With both the NTU-USP and PBL track supporting his intellectual and personal growth, Mr Surattee is confident of the future.

"Being in the PBL track has helped me to deepen my knowledge of the financial markets, taught me to think critically and enabled me to spot trends in the ever-changing economy," he says.

Not just a paper-pusher

Mr Rayner Oon uses his real-life firefighting and rescue experiences to craft better policies for life-saving operations

BY LUKE TAN

As the commander of a fire station, Mr Rayner Oon remembers responding to blazes that took all hands on deck - and then some - to bring under control.

These days, the 30-year-old works to make sure the alarm bells go off as little as possible in his role as a senior manager (safety and security) at the Policy Development Division at the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), where he is on secondment from the Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF).

Developing career chemistry

This career journey began for Mr Oon in 2009 at Imperial College London, where he was studying for a master's degree in chemical engineering on a Singapore Government Scholarship (SGS).

"I believed the engineering disciplines would hone my analytical and problem-solving skills," he says.

"I also wanted a career that was not desk-bound, with the opportunity to be trained to save people who are in emergency, life-threatening situations."

While the English climate and way of life initially proved a challenge, he found balance in activities hosted by the Imperial College Singapore Society, as well as futsal games.

The scholarship also helped by covering his tuition fees, as well as providing a monthly allowance and return airfare.

Fired up to fight fires

During a summer break in August 2011, Mr Oon returned to Singapore for a one-month internship with the SCDF's Fire Research Unit, where he was introduced to its various research and forensic capabilities.

After graduating in July 2013, he trained for nine months at the Civil Defence Academy before being assigned to Tampines Fire Station, where he was eventually made its commander.

He rose to the challenge, gaining experience not only in logistics and administrative skills, but also from being put in charge of some 130 officers. His background in chemical engineering also came in handy, given this fire station's hazardous materials



PHOTO: TED CHEN

(hazmat) response capabilities.

One memorable incident was the CK Building fire in August 2016, which involved three floors of a warehouse and took over 16 hours to extinguish.

"It was the first time I had encountered a fire of this magnitude," he says.

With his mettle proven, Mr Oon received a secondment to the MHA one month ago, where he is working on policies that maximise SCDF's resources to deliver optimal emergency medical services to the general public, ensuring that the most critical cases receive the highest priority.

Passion makes for a good fit

Mr Oon admits missing the adrenaline rush and sense of camaraderie when responding

to incidents, but believes that these experiences have given him better appreciation of operational issues on the ground.

And no matter which level he has worked at, he affirms: "It is extremely rewarding and satisfying to know that you have made a positive difference in somebody's life."

At the same time, Mr Oon is also squarely focused on his personal development.

"SCDF has helped by exposing me to different areas of work, while also giving the opportunity to attend courses to upgrade myself," he says.

His advice for scholars deciding on a career path: "Do your homework and ask questions. Ultimately, it is important to find a good job fit, and do something you are passionate about."

Do your homework and ask questions. Ultimately, it is important to find a good job fit, and do something you are passionate about.

MR RAYNER OON
SCDF/MHA

SCHOLARS' CHOICE II

Expanding her horizons

The global community at ESSEC helps Ms Stephanie Lok to broaden her perspective of the world



PHOTO: TED CHEN

BY JOSHUA WONG

It helps to dream big when you already know which career you want to pursue. For Ms Stephanie Lok, her goal is to head the marketing department of a luxury fashion company one day.

The 20-year-old, who graduated from the School of the Arts Singapore, is currently pursuing a Global Bachelor of Business Administration at ESSEC Business School in Singapore.

Ms Lok says: "I wanted to pursue a business career in Singapore while exploring something outside of my comfort zone."

"ESSEC offers the best of both worlds: it provides me with an international tertiary education experience while allowing me to study and network in Singapore."

Great exposure

Ms Lok is a recipient of ESSEC's Academic Excellence Scholarship, which covers 25 per cent of tuition fees.

She enjoys the learning environment at her school, where class sizes are kept intimate. Students are encouraged to share their thoughts and opinions while being respectful of others' viewpoints.

ESSEC also has a hands-on approach to education that encourages the application of skills in a real-world context.

During a semester break last year, Ms Lok interned as an event planner and social media manager at a local food and beverage and lifestyle company, which enabled her to gain exposure and build her network in Singapore.

As ESSEC is an international business school—it was founded in France in 1907, and also has campuses in Paris and Morocco—she has the chance to interact with people from different countries and backgrounds.

Broadening horizons

While this means she has to adapt to the different communication styles of her classmates, it has also broadened her perspectives, and made her a more patient and accommodating person.

"Everyone is friendly and open. Some of my French classmates have even taught me some French and piqued my interest in that language," she shares.

"Learning to communicate well will definitely benefit me in the professional world, especially as the workforce becomes increasingly globalised."

More importantly, Ms Lok finds that her education at ESSEC equips her with the knowledge and skills she needs to succeed in her chosen field.

"My education has prepared me to be a creative and adept professional, and also fosters a global mindset through my interactions with a culturally diverse student population," she says.

ESSEC offers the best of both worlds: it provides me with an international tertiary education experience while allowing me to stay and network in Singapore.

MS STEPHANIE LOK
student
ESSEC Business School



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SCHOLARS' CHOICE II

I believe with good planning and design, people will see the beauty in their everyday spaces — and that way, they will come to own and take pride in their homes and towns too.

MS LIM FANG TING
Architect, HDB



To Ms Lim Fang Ting, the most meaningful building an architect can build is a home. PHOTO: TED CHEN

The yin and yang of urban design

A career in HDB is perfectly suited to Ms Lim Fang Ting's appreciation of both the creative and the technical

BY BRYANT CHAN

There is a theory that people are either left-brained or right-brained — meaning that one side of their brain is dominant. Left-brainers are said to be more logical, analytical and objective, while right-brainers tend to be intuitive, creative types.

Architect Lim Fang Ting does not believe in such distinctions. In her mind, both types of thinking work together to create a beautiful melange of form and function.

"I knew I wanted to pursue a career that would allow me to constantly push my creative boundaries," says the 26-year-old.

She adds: "However, as someone who also values logic and rationality, I was drawn to architecture because it's one of the unique fields that's built on equal parts brainpower, creativity and dedication."

During her school years, she was constantly filling the pages of her sketchbooks with re-imaginings of the urban spaces around her — just as her heart became ever more set on making these places a reality.

Her research on the subject led her to understand that architecture was far more than just the construction of buildings and structures. She realised that at its core, architecture was about providing shelter.

"The most meaningful building an architect can build is a home," she declares.

And seeing the influence that the Housing and Development Board (HDB) had on the design of Singapore's living spaces, Ms Lim was immediately drawn to it.

"A career with HDB would allow me to design places and spaces that people would look forward to going home to and spending time in every day," she says.

The prospect of being able to pursue her passion, while having her tertiary studies fully sponsored, made the appeal of the HDB Undergraduate Scholarship irresistible.

Form meets function

Today, with a Master of Architecture from the National University of Singapore under her belt, Ms Lim is an executive architect in HDB's Research & Planning Group — a role that perfectly meets her need for both creativity and logic.

Her current job scope lets her wear the hats of both an urban planner and an urban designer, immersing her in both the technical aspects of urban planning, and more abstract concepts like how people will experience and enjoy urban spaces.

As cities grow denser, the importance of public spaces increases significantly, she explains. The emphasis on the design, quality and place-making aspects of public spaces, and how they shape the living environment of residents, has similarly become greater.

This is why part of her involvement in the Remaking Our Heartlands initiative for Toa Payoh Town included engaging heartland residents to garner personal feedback, giving her a more comprehensive sense of the sentiment on the ground.

"That led me to see the importance of community engagement and participatory design in our planning work as well," she says.

While it may be difficult to constantly come up with innovative ways to plan Singapore's urban spaces — particularly with such strict land and space constraints — Ms Lim and her team relish the challenge.

"I believe with good planning and design, people will see the beauty in their everyday spaces — and that way, they will come to own and take pride in their homes and towns too."



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SCHOLARS' CHOICE II

The write job

Journalism is no walk in the park, but there is no other job that Ms Toh Wen Li would rather be doing



You've got to really believe in what you do, because journalism isn't one of those nine-to-five professions where work ends the moment you leave the office.

MS TOH WEN LI
journalist, SPH

Being a journalist allows Ms Toh Wen Li to do what she loves. PHOTO: TED CHEN

BY BRYANT CHAN

"No one's in journalism for the money," says reporter Toh Wen Li.

It's a startling statement to hear, especially from a Singapore Press Holdings (SPH) scholar, but the 25-year-old stands by it.

According to her, it is a common sentiment in the newsroom.

After all, being a reporter involves working long hours, being able to think on your feet, and coping with the stress of multiple deadlines, often just hours apart.

"You've got to really believe in what you do, because journalism isn't one of those nine-to-five professions where work ends the moment you leave the office," she says.

So why is she in it? "Growth," she says simply. "I hope to grow. I want to be a better writer and journalist — it's as simple as that."

Honing her craft

Ms Toh's answer has remained the same ever since she first stepped into the newsroom seven years ago as a fresh-faced intern at the Life section of The Straits Times.

English had always been her forte throughout school, so a career in journalism seemed like the next logical step.

"In the newsroom, you get thrown into the deep end fairly quickly," she recalls. "But that's a good thing, because it gives you a clear idea of whether journalism is for you or not."

Fortunately, it turned out that journalism was most assuredly for her.

During her five months at The Straits Times, Ms Toh's keen nose for a good story and acute news sense made her an easy choice for the Singapore Press Holdings Scholarship (Overseas).

During her four years studying at the University of Cambridge, she continued to seek out opportunities to hone her journalistic skills, scoring placements in The Guardian and regional newspaper Cambridge News. Both gave her valuable insight into how other newsrooms operate.

One such attachment even saw her spending several weeks in Edinburgh to review plays for an online publication, Broadway Baby.

But it wasn't all work, all the time. At Cambridge, she helped organise a TEDxCambridge conference, dabbled in poetry writing, and participated in a volunteer work stint teaching English to primary school children.

All in a day's work

Today, after obtaining a Bachelor of Arts with Honours in English and a Master of Philosophy in American Literature, Ms Toh has come full circle.

She is back in the newsroom at Life, but this time as a full-fledged reporter who has earned her stripes.

As an arts reporter, she writes several arts-related stories a week, and also reviews books and plays.

She also contributes to The Straits Times' #OpinionOfTheDay column, and co-hosts a books podcast called Bookmark This! every month.

It is a lot to cover, but Ms Toh relishes the work nonetheless.

"There's no typical day in the life of a journalist," she says.

She could be profiling a doctor providing low-cost healthcare for migrant workers one day, and exploring an ex-national swimmer turned composer's healing journey through calligraphy the next.

"It may sound like a horrible cliché, but being a journalist allows me to do what I love, and get paid for it," she says.

"I get to write about issues that matter, and have conversations with fascinating people from all sorts of backgrounds."



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SCHOLARS' CHOICE II

Best
of both worlds

The NUS Performing & Visual Arts Scholarship enables Miss Lau Yun Xi to pursue two loves — music and medicine

BY NIVANI ELANGO VAN

Miss Lau Yun Xi is living proof that science and the arts are not mutually exclusive.

Only 19, she is one of the recipients of the NUS Performing & Visual Arts Scholarship, and is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS).

The scholarship allows Miss Lau to focus on studying medicine for the next few years without having to sacrifice her passion for playing the cello. She is a member of the NUS Symphony Orchestra.

She contributes actively to the performing arts scene in NUS, and participates in various community involvement programmes around the school.

Miss Lau says: "I started learning both the piano and cello when I was four — my parents thought music was something I would enjoy, and they were right."

In 2012, she joined the Singapore National Youth Orchestra (SNYO), and as part of the Lanxess-SNYO Exchange Programme, went to London for masterclasses from Natalie Klein, an associate professor at the Royal College of Music, Marcel Bergman, principal

cellist of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, and Jan Vogler, a distinguished cellist.

Her love for the cello prompted her to apply for the NUS scholarship. "It was ideal as it would provide me with an avenue to actively pursue my interest in performing even as I continued with my academic studies," she says.

The path to patient care
Miss Lau opted to study medicine so that she can help people in tangible ways.

In her first semester of school, she learnt how the consequences of poor health did not affect just

This scholarship has given me opportunities to hear leaders from both the music and medical communities share their experiences and insights, as well as meet other scholars who have similar interests, but also different outlooks and perspectives.

MISS LAU YUN XI
NUS

PHOTO: TED CHEN

the patients, but also the people around them.

"While volunteering at Meet-the-People sessions as an appeal letter writer, one resident approached us to request for financial assistance because she had difficulty affording long-term dialysis treatment for her elderly parents," Miss Lau says.

Her stint at these sessions taught her how to communicate effectively with elderly residents to help them feel more at ease.

"I do fall back on what I've learnt during these sessions when I help out at health screenings for class," she says.

A similar learning initiative is the Patient-Based Programme (PBP), which all medical students at NUS go through, and which serves as an introduction to Singapore's healthcare system.

The PBP is a series of supervised consultations with patients and healthcare workers, and through which students learn to manage an open interview, exercise listening skills, and offer patient-centred care.

"I've learnt a lot from interacting with doctors, allied healthcare professionals and patients, who very kindly took the time to answer our questions and share their experiences," Miss Lau says. "I've grown to appreciate how important empathy and respect are in healthcare."

When she qualifies as a doctor, she hopes to be kind and competent, and make a positive difference to the people she meets.

"This scholarship has given me opportunities to hear leaders from both the music and medical communities share their experiences and insights, as well as meet other scholars who have similar interests, but also different outlooks and perspectives," she adds.

"The NUS Scholarship is great as it provides a lot of flexibility and the freedom to pursue your passions."



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SCHOLARS' CHOICE II

Keeping the big picture in mind

The MND Undergraduate Scholarship helped Ms Rachel Liu to realise her lifelong dream

BY CHEN JINYAO

It takes more than textbooks and lectures to fully understand something like urban planning. Even as a student, Ms Rachel Liu knew she had to gain a well-rounded exposure in her field of study, and not to just rely on classroom learning. That was why she took a gap year after her A levels, and did a range of internships in the architecture, urban planning and real estate industries. The manager with the Ministry of National Development's Strategic Planning Division is glad she made that decision as it helped her to identify her areas of interest and the aspects of urban planning to focus on. Ms Liu applied for an MND Undergraduate Scholarship for overseas study in 2014. It took her to Cornell University in New York, where she completed a four-year Bachelors of Science in Urban and Regional Studies. "I applied for the scholarship because I realised that policymaking is where changes happen. Also, the scholarship offered the opportunity of rotating within the family of MND agencies, which was attractive because it provided flexibility within a scope of work I was interested in." Her time spent at Cornell was valuable – there were the urban studies-related modules, ranging from more theoretical ones like economics, anthropology and history, to more applied approaches such as community-based planning workshops and design studios. But what really opened her eyes were the activities that took her away from the classroom,



PHOTO: TED CHEN

such as the summer she spent studying conservation biology and field ecology in Brazil's Atlantic Forest, outside of São Paulo. During her second summer break, she did a horticultural internship with the Cornell Botanic Gardens. "Both these experiences changed my perception of the potential of natural spaces in Singapore, to offer value for both conservation and people," she says. Ms Liu also spent a semester in Rome, studying architectural history and "discovering the layers of architecture, art and planning history in Rome, with the city itself as the classroom – juxtaposed with contemporary Italian society facing issues such as ageing and immigration".

Bridging theory and practical
All these out-of-the classroom learning experiences allowed Ms Liu to bridge academia and practice, and provided her with a new way of understanding urban planning.

Last August, she returned to Singapore and took up her current post, where she handles policies on land use. She describes her job as a balance of regulation and aspiration. "Part of my work is to ensure that land and space in Singapore are used accordingly to the Government's plan. And the other part – the aspirational part – is to set the direction for Singapore's growth for the next 10, 20, 50 years – and then putting in place the policy structures to help us get there." Ms Liu is convinced that even though Singapore is already well-planned, there are opportunities to do more. "Singapore is such a young city. There is much potential for reinvention, just like what much older cities have had to do to remain relevant. I believe we can meet the challenge of reinventing Singapore to remain competitive and relevant in a shifting global context, without compromising on our identity and heritage."

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MS RACHEL LIU
manager,
MND

GUIDE TO SCHOLARSHIPS			
ORGANISATION		COURSE/ UNIVERSITIES/ COUNTRY OF STUDY	VALUE OF AWARD AND BOND
REQUIREMENTS			
HOUSING DEVELOPMENT BOARD (HDB)			
HDB Undergraduate Scholarship • Overseas / Local • Mid-Term	Disciplines relevant to HDB including: • Architecture/ Landscape Architecture • Urban Planning • Engineering (Civil/ Electrical/ Mechanical) • Economics • Sociology/ Data Analytics/ Statistics • Building/ Real Estate • Computer Engineering/ Computer Science/ Information Systems • Communications & New Media • Accountancy • Reputable local or overseas universities	Value of Overseas Scholarship Award • Tuition and other compulsory fees • Maintenance allowance • Pre-studies allowance including warm clothing, computer and settling-in allowance • Return economy airfare • Vacation attachment with HDB (including return airfare for attachment) • Opportunity for sponsorship for approved student exchange programme Bond of Overseas Scholarship Award • 6 years Value of Local Scholarship Award • Tuition and other compulsory fees • Maintenance allowance • Pre-studies allowance including computer and settling-in allowance • Vacation attachment with HDB • Opportunity for sponsorship for approved student exchange programme Bond of Local Scholarship Award • 4 years For the HDB Mid-Term Scholarship, the bond duration will be commensurate with the remaining duration of study.	Singaporeans and Permanent Residents with excellent academic results and CCA records
HDB Specialist Scholarship • Local • Local Mid-Term	• Architecture / Landscape Architecture • Engineering (Civil/Mechanical/Electrical) • Computer Engineering / Computer Science/ Information Systems • Reputable local universities	An annual allowance of: • Architecture - \$17,000 • Engineering - \$16,500 • Computer Engineering / Computer Science/ Information Systems - \$16,500 Bond of Local Scholarship Award • 4 years For the HDB Mid-Term Specialist Scholarship, the bond duration will be commensurate with the remaining duration of study.	Singaporeans and Permanent Residents with very good academic results and CCA records
MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (MHA)			
The Singapore Police Force Scholarship (SPFS) SPFS is one of the most prestigious scholarships awarded by the Public Service Commission. SPFS is awarded to candidates who have shown outstanding academic performance and leadership qualities, with a strong desire to serve in the Singapore Police Force.	Most disciplines except Medicine, Dentistry and Architecture *Applicants intending to pursue a degree in Law will not be called to the Bar Renowned Overseas or Local Universities	• Tuition and other approved fees • Monthly overseas or local maintenance allowance • Pre-studies allowance e.g. settling-in, warm clothing, computer • Return airfare for attachment programme • Sponsorship for Masters and exchange programmes (if requirements are met) • Full salary for the duration of study • National Service Disruption Bond Duration: • 6 years bond (English speaking countries) • 5 years bond (Non-English speaking countries)	• Singapore citizens or Permanent Residents intending to take up Singapore Citizenship • Good co-curricular activities (CCA) records and Physical Fitness (PES A or B) • GCE 'A' Levels (with at least 10 academic units), International Baccalaureate (IB), Polytechnic Diploma (with Merit) or equivalent • Display strong leadership qualities and excel in Officer Cadet School (OCS) • Keen interest in a career with the SPF
Singapore Merit Scholarship (SMS)	Most disciplines except Medicine, Dentistry and Architecture *Applicants intending to pursue a degree in Law will not be called to the Bar Renowned Overseas or Local Universities	• Tuition and other approved fees • Monthly overseas or local maintenance allowance • Pre-studies allowance e.g. settling-in, warm clothing, computer • Return airfare for attachment programme • Sponsorship for Masters and exchange programmes (if requirements are met) • Full salary for the duration of study • National Service Disruption Bond Duration: • 6 years bond (English speaking countries) • 5 years bond (Non-English speaking countries)	• Singapore citizens or Permanent Residents intending to take up Singapore Citizenship • Good co-curricular activities (CCA) records and Physical Fitness (PES A or B) • GCE 'A' Levels (with at least 10 academic units), International Baccalaureate (IB), Polytechnic Diploma (with Merit) or equivalent • Display strong leadership qualities and excel in Officer Cadet School (OCS) • Keen interest in a career with the Home Team
Singapore Government Scholarship (SGS)	Most disciplines except Medicine, Dentistry and Architecture *Applicants intending to pursue a degree in Law will not be called to the Bar Renowned Overseas or Local Universities	• Tuition and other approved fees • Monthly overseas or local maintenance allowance • Pre-studies allowance e.g. settling-in, warm clothing, computer • Return airfare for attachment programme • Sponsorship for exchange programmes (if requirements are met) Bond Duration: • 6 years bond (English speaking countries) • 5 years bond (Non-English speaking countries)	• Singapore citizens or Permanent Residents intending to take up Singapore Citizenship • Good co-curricular activities (CCA) records and Physical Fitness (PES A or B) • GCE 'A' Levels (with at least 10 academic units), International Baccalaureate (IB), Polytechnic Diploma (with Merit) or equivalent • Good performance in National Service • Keen interest in a career with the Home Team
SCDF Paramedic Scholarship	Para-medicine or related disciplines in Emergency Health or Clinical Practice Renowned Overseas Universities	• Tuition and other approved fees • Monthly overseas or local maintenance allowance • Pre-studies allowance e.g. settling-in, warm clothing, computer • Return airfare for attachment programme • Sponsorship for exchange programmes (if requirements are met) Bond Duration: • 6 years bond (English speaking countries) • 5 years bond (Non-English speaking countries)	• Singapore citizens or Permanent Residents intending to take up Singapore Citizenship • Good co-curricular activities (CCA) records and Physical Fitness (PES A or B) • GCE 'A' Levels (with at least 10 academic units), International Baccalaureate (IB), Polytechnic Diploma (with Merit) or equivalent • Good performance in National Service • Keen interest in a career with the SCDF

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GUIDE TO SCHOLARSHIPS

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ORGANISATION	COURSE/ UNIVERSITIES/ COUNTRY OF STUDY	VALUE OF AWARD AND BOND	REQUIREMENTS
Home Team Science and Technology Scholarship	Science and Engineering Disciplines Science Disciplines : Biology, Biochemistry, Biotechnology, Chemistry, Computer Science & Physics Engineering Disciplines : Computer Science & Engineering, Electrical & Electronics Engineering Renowned Overseas or Local Universities	• Tuition and other approved fees • Monthly overseas or local maintenance allowance • Pre-studies allowance e.g. settling-in, warm clothing, computer • Return airfare for attachment programme • Sponsorship for exchange programmes (if requirements are met) Bond Duration: • 6 years bond (English speaking countries) • 5 years bond (Non-English speaking countries)	• Singapore citizens or Permanent Residents intending to take up Singapore Citizenship • Good co-curricular activities (CCA) records and Physical Fitness (PES A or B) • GCE'A/Levels (with at least 10 academic units), International Baccalaureate (IB), Polytechnic Diploma (with Merit) or equivalent • Good performance in National Service • Keen interest in a career with the Singapore Police Force with deep specialisation in science, technology and engineering
Local Merit Scholarship (LMS)	Most disciplines except Medicine, Dentistry and Architecture *Applicants intending to pursue a degree in Law will not be called to the Bar Local Universities	• Tuition and other approved fees • Maintenance allowance • Pre-studies allowance e.g. computer • Hostel allowance • Sponsorship for exchange programmes (if requirements are met) Bond Duration: • 4 years bond	• Singapore citizens or Permanent Residents intending to take up Singapore Citizenship • Good co-curricular activities (CCA) records and Physical Fitness (PES A or B) • GCE'A/Levels (with at least 10 academic units), International Baccalaureate (IB), Polytechnic Diploma (with Merit) or equivalent • Good performance in National Service • Keen interest in a career with the Home Team
Home Team Local Study Award (HTLSA)	Science, Mathematics, Engineering, Technology, Criminology or Security. Local Universities	• Tuition and other approved fees • Maintenance allowance • Pre-studies allowance e.g. computer • Vacation and attachment developmental programmes (if requirements are met) Bond Duration: • 4 years bond	• Singapore citizens or Permanent Residents intending to take up Singapore Citizenship • Good co-curricular activities (CCA) records and Physical Fitness (PES A or B) • GCE'A/Levels (with at least 10 academic units), International Baccalaureate (IB), Polytechnic Diploma or equivalent • Good performance in National Service • Keen interest in a career with the Home Team
MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (MND)			
MND EDGE Scholarship	Courses/Disciplines of study: • Engineering • Urban Studies • Urban Planning & Design • Environmental Science • Real Estate • Sociology • Economics • Geography And any other related disciplines Countries and universities of study approved by MND (Local / Overseas)	• Tuition fees and other approved charges • Maintenance and other allowances • Internship attachment with MND (including return airfare for overseas scholars) • Return airfare (for overseas scholars) • Sponsorship of approved student exchange / summer programmes Bond Duration: For undergraduate study in overseas universities: 6 years For undergraduate study in Singapore: 4 years	Applicants must: • Be a Singapore Citizen or Singapore Permanent Resident who is willing to take up Singapore Citizenship • Have strong leadership qualities and potential • Have good academic and Co-Curricular Activities (CCAs) records • Have GCE A Levels, polytechnic diploma with merit or equivalent qualifications e.g. International Baccalaureate or high school diploma • Have a strong interest in a career with the MND Family and the Public Service
NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY (NTU)			
Renaissance Engineering Programme Scholarship	Successful awardees should read a full-time undergraduate Renaissance Engineering Programme (REP) at NTU.	• Full coverage of subsidised tuition fees (after tuition grant). • Living allowance of \$56,000 per academic year for all years except in year 3. Allowances for year 3 will be determined by REP Office. • Book allowance of \$5500 per academic year. • Accommodation allowance of up to \$52,000 per academic year (applicable to scholarship holders who reside in NTU hostels only). • Computer allowance of \$51,750 (one-off). • Overseas benefits to Year 3 students: - Enrolment and tuition fees at a partner university. - Overseas accommodation and meals/meal allowance at the partner university, including the official duration of the industrial orientation programme/internship. - Return airfare. Bond Duration: No bond	• Open to Singapore Citizens and Singapore Permanent Residents. • Possess outstanding Singapore-Cambridge GCE'A'Level, Diploma awarded by a Polytechnic in Singapore, NUS High School Diploma or IB Diploma qualifications. • Excellent co-curricular records. • Strong leadership qualities and potential.
NTU-University Scholars Programme (NTU-USP) Scholarship	Successful awardees should read a full-time undergraduate degree programme in NTU and be on the NTU-University Scholars Programme (NTU-USP).	• Full coverage of subsidised tuition fees (after tuition grant). • Living allowance of \$56,500 per academic year. • Accommodation allowance of up to \$52,000 per academic year (applicable to scholarship holders who reside in NTU hostels only). • Travel Grant of \$55,000 for an overseas study/attachment programme (one-off) subject to terms and conditions in the Travel Grant form. • Computer allowance of \$51,750 (one-off). • Overseas benefits in the semester of the NTU-USP Study Abroad Programme (structured exchange programme): - Enrolment and tuition fees at a partner university. - Overseas accommodation, living allowances and other related costs. - Return airfare and transportation to/from partner university (one-off). Bond Duration: No bond	• Open to all nationalities. • Possess outstanding Singapore-Cambridge GCE'A'level, Diploma awarded by a polytechnic in Singapore, NUS High School Diploma, IB Diploma or Year 12 equivalent qualifications. • Excellent co-curricular records. • Strong leadership qualities and potential.
Nanyang Scholarship (CN Yang Scholars Programme)	Successful awardees should read a full-time undergraduate degree programme and be on the CN Yang Scholars Programme.	• Full coverage of subsidised tuition fees (after tuition grant). • Living allowance of \$56,500 per academic year. • Accommodation allowance of up to \$52,000 per academic year (applicable to scholarship holders who reside in NTU hostels only). • Travel grant of \$55,000 for an overseas programme (one-off). • Computer allowance of \$51,750 (one-off). • The CN Yang Scholars Programme offers: - Guaranteed four years of stay in NTU halls of residence. - Guaranteed overseas exchange for one semester. - Guaranteed overseas final year research project with coverage for airfare, accommodation, meals, insurance and visa fees. - Opportunities for research attachment from year one onwards and to attend an international conference with subsidy. Bond Duration: No bond	• Open to all nationalities. • Possess outstanding Singapore-Cambridge GCE'A'Level, Diploma awarded by a Polytechnic in Singapore, NUS High School Diploma, IB Diploma or Year 12 equivalent qualifications. • Excellent co-curricular records. • Strong leadership qualities and potential.
Nanyang Scholarship	Successful awardees should read a full-time undergraduate degree programme [^] in NTU. [^] The scholarship will cover the years of study in NTU. For the Biomedical Sciences & Chinese Medicine programme, the Scholarship will cover only the first three years of study in NTU.	• Full coverage of subsidised tuition fees (after tuition grant). • Living allowance of \$56,500 per academic year. • Accommodation allowance of up to \$52,000 per academic year (applicable to scholarship holders who reside in NTU hostels only). • Travel grant of \$55,000 for an overseas programme (one-off). • Computer allowance of \$51,750 (one-off). • Priority for Overseas Programme. • Participation in Scholars Orientation Programme, Scholars Award Ceremony, Outreach Programmes and Eminent Speaker Series. Bond Duration: No bond	• Open to all nationalities. • Possess outstanding Singapore-Cambridge GCE'A'Level, Diploma awarded by a Polytechnic in Singapore, NUS High School Diploma, IB Diploma or Year 12 equivalent qualifications. • Excellent co-curricular records. • Strong leadership qualities and potential.
College Scholarship	Successful awardees should read a full-time undergraduate degree programme [^] in NTU. [^] The scholarship will cover the years of study in NTU. For the Biomedical Sciences & Chinese Medicine programme, the Scholarship will cover only the first three years of study in NTU.	• Full coverage of subsidised tuition fees (after tuition grant). • Living allowance of \$53,600 per academic year Bond Duration: No bond	• Open to all nationalities. • Possess outstanding Singapore-Cambridge GCE'A'Level, Diploma awarded by a Polytechnic in Singapore, NUS High School Diploma, IB Diploma or Year 12 equivalent qualifications. • Good co-curricular records. • Good leadership qualities and potential.
E. W. Barker Scholarship	Successful awardees should read a full-time undergraduate Sport Science & Management Programme in NTU.	• \$58,000 award (one-off) per academic year. Bond Duration: No bond.	• Open to Singapore Citizens and Singapore Permanent Residents. • Possess outstanding Singapore-Cambridge GCE'A'Level, Diploma awarded by a Polytechnic in Singapore, Singapore Sports School AUT Diploma, NUS High School Diploma or IB Diploma qualifications. • Excellent co-curricular records. • Strong leadership qualities and potential.
Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences Scholarship	Successful awardees should read a full-time humanities, arts and social sciences undergraduate degree programme in NTU, which is offered by the School of Art, Design and Media, School of Humanities, School of Social Sciences, or Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information. The scholarship will cover the years of study at NTU.	• Full coverage of subsidised tuition fees (after tuition grant). • Travel grant of \$53,000 for an overseas programme (one-off) on condition that the scholarship holder attain at least one semester of Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of 4.50 over 5.0, any time after completing one year of studies (two full semesters) in a humanities, arts and social sciences undergraduate degree programme. Bond Duration: No bond	• Open to all nationalities. • Possess outstanding Singapore-Cambridge GCE'A'Level, Diploma awarded by a Polytechnic in Singapore, NUS High School Diploma, IB Diploma or Year 12 equivalent qualifications. • Good co-curricular records. • Good leadership qualities and potential.
LKCMedicine Scholarship	Successful awardees should read a full-time undergraduate Medicine Programme in NTU.	• Full coverage of subsidised tuition fees (after tuition grant). • Living allowance of \$56,000 per academic year. • Book allowance of \$5500 per academic year. • Computer allowance of \$51,500 (one-off). Bond Duration: No bond attached, apart from the five-year bond with the Ministry of Health upon completing the undergraduate programme.	• Open to Singapore Citizens. • Possess outstanding Singapore-Cambridge GCE'A'Level, Diploma awarded by a Polytechnic in Singapore, NUS High School Diploma or IB Diploma qualifications. • Outstanding contributions or attributes in other areas such as community service, student leadership, or sporting excellence.
LKY-STEP Award	Successful awardees should read a full-time undergraduate degree programme [^] in NTU. [^] The scholarship will cover the years of study in NTU. For the Biomedical Sciences & Chinese Medicine programme, the Scholarship will cover only the first three years of study in NTU.	• One-off cash award of \$53,500. • Waiver of subsidised tuition fees (after tuition grant) by NTU if LKY-STEP Award holders are unsuccessful in securing a concurrent scholarship. Bond Duration: No bond	• Open to Singapore Citizens and Singapore Permanent Residents. • Possess outstanding Diploma (preferably Diploma with Merit) awarded by a Polytechnic in Singapore or SIT (Poly-F50) qualifications. • Excellent co-curricular records. • Strong leadership qualities and potential.
Toh Kian Chui Scholarship	Successful awardees should read a full-time undergraduate Medicine Programme in NTU.	• Full coverage of subsidised tuition fees (after tuition grant). • Living allowance of \$56,000 per academic year. • Book allowance of \$5500 per academic year. Bond Duration: No bond attached, apart from the five-year bond with the Ministry of Health upon completing the undergraduate programme.	• Open to Singapore Citizens. • Possess outstanding Singapore-Cambridge GCE'A'Level, Diploma awarded by a Polytechnic in Singapore, NUS High School Diploma or IB Diploma qualifications. • Outstanding contributions or attributes in other areas such as community service, student leadership, or sporting excellence. • Preference will be given to students from lower income families.
University Engineering Scholarship	Successful awardees should read a full-time undergraduate Engineering or Technology-related programme in NTU.	• Full coverage of subsidised tuition fees (after tuition grant). • Living allowance of \$55,800 per academic year. • Computer allowance of \$52,000 (one-off). • Upon completion of the programme, scholarship holders will have to serve a four-year bond working in the Engineering-related field in Singapore.	• Open to Singapore Citizens and Singapore Permanent Residents. • Possess outstanding Diploma awarded by a Polytechnic in Singapore (preferably Diploma with Merit) in Engineering or Technology-related courses. • Excellent co-curricular records. • Strong leadership qualities and potential.
Wee Cho Yaw Future Leaders Award	Successful awardees should read a full-time undergraduate degree programme in NTU.	• Full coverage of subsidised tuition fees (after tuition grant). • Living allowance of \$512,000 per academic year. • Overseas allowance of \$516,000. Bond Duration: No bond	• Open to Singapore Citizens and Singapore Permanent Residents. • Possess outstanding Singapore-Cambridge GCE'A'Level, Diploma awarded by a Polytechnic in Singapore, NUS High School Diploma or IB Diploma qualifications. • Outstanding contributions or attributes in other areas such as community service, student leadership, or sporting excellence. • Preference will be given to students from lower income families.
Wee Kim Wee Legacy Fund Undergraduate Scholarship	Successful awardees should read a full-time undergraduate Communication Studies programme in NTU.	• Full coverage of subsidised tuition fees (after tuition grant). • Living allowance of \$56,000 per academic year. Bond Duration: No bond	• Open to Singapore Citizens and Singapore Permanent Residents. • Possess outstanding Singapore-Cambridge GCE'A'Level, Diploma awarded by a Polytechnic in Singapore, NUS High School Diploma or IB Diploma qualifications. • Excellent co-curricular records. • Strong leadership qualities and potential.
ASEAN Undergraduate Scholarship	Successful awardees should read a full-time undergraduate degree programme [^] in NTU with the exception of the Renaissance Engineering Programme. [^] The scholarship will cover the years of study in NTU. For the Biomedical Sciences & Chinese Medicine programme, the Scholarship will cover only the first three years of study in NTU.	• Full coverage of subsidised tuition fees (after tuition grant). • Living allowance of \$55,800 per academic year. Bond Duration: No bond	• Open to Singapore Permanent Residents and citizens from ASEAN countries (except Singapore). • Possess outstanding Singapore-Cambridge GCE'A'Level, Diploma awarded by a Polytechnic in Singapore, NUS High School Diploma, IB Diploma or Year 12 equivalent qualifications. • Excellent co-curricular records. • Strong leadership qualities and potential.

GUIDE TO SCHOLARSHIPS

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ORGANISATION	COURSE/ UNIVERSITIES/ COUNTRY OF STUDY	VALUE OF AWARD AND BOND	REQUIREMENTS
NTU Science and Engineering Undergraduate Scholarship	Successful awardees should read a full-time undergraduate Engineering or Science programme in NTU, with the exception of Biomedical Sciences & Chinese Medicine Programme, Renaissance Engineering Programme and Medicine.	• Full coverage of subsidised tuition fees (after tuition grant) and all compulsory miscellaneous fees. • Living allowance of S\$6,000 per academic year. • Annual accommodation allowance pegged at the lowest double room rate for on-campus accommodation. • Settling-in allowance of S\$200 (one-off). • One-way air passage from home country to Singapore at the commencement of the programme and a return air passage upon completion of the programme. Scholarship holders are required to serve a six-year bond with the sponsor or organisation as directed by the sponsor, or if not so required to serve, work in a Singapore-registered company.	• Open to Singapore Permanent Residents and citizens from Asian countries (except Singapore). • Possess outstanding Year 12 equivalent qualifications. • Excellent co-curricular records. • Strong leadership qualities and potential.
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE (NUS)			
NUS Global Merit Scholarship	Any full-time undergraduate course leading to a first degree, except Dentistry, Medicine, Music and Yale-NUS College	• Full subsidy for tuition fees (after MOE Tuition Grant subsidy) • Annual living allowance of S\$6,000 • S\$2,800 annual accommodation allowance if Scholar is staying on campus, S\$2,905 if Scholar is staying in Ridge View Residential College, or S\$4,480 if Scholar is staying in one of the University Town Residential Colleges • One-time computer allowance of S\$2,000 • S\$7,500 Student Exchange Programme/ NUS Overseas Colleges allowance per semester for non-Asian countries and Japan, and S\$5,000 per semester for other Asian countries, for up to a maximum of 2-semesters • Eligibility to enrol in the University Scholars Programme (USP) or University Town College Programme (UTCP) • Guaranteed offer of on-campus accommodation (excluding the Residential Colleges or University Town) for first two years of undergraduate studies • Guaranteed placement for a 1-semester overseas Student Exchange Programme Bond Duration: Bond-free	• Singaporean Citizens • Strong leadership qualities and potential • Good co-curricular activities record • Offered GCE 'A' Levels, Diploma from a polytechnic in Singapore or equivalent qualifications (e.g. International Baccalaureate/ NUS High School Diploma)
NUS Merit Scholarship	Any full-time undergraduate course leading to a first degree, except Music and Yale-NUS College	• Full subsidy for tuition fees (after MOE Tuition Grant subsidy) • Annual living allowance of S\$6,000 • One-time computer allowance of S\$2,000 • Guaranteed offer of on-campus accommodation (excluding the Residential Colleges or University Town) for first two years of undergraduate studies • Guaranteed placement for a 1-semester overseas Student Exchange Programme Bond Duration: Bond-free	• Singaporean Citizens • Strong leadership qualities and potential • Good co-curricular activities record • Offered GCE 'A' Levels, Diploma from a polytechnic in Singapore or equivalent qualifications (e.g. International Baccalaureate/ NUS High School Diploma)
NUS Sports Scholarship	Any full-time undergraduate course leading to a first degree, except Music and Yale-NUS College	• Full subsidy for tuition fees (after MOE Tuition Grant subsidy) • Annual living allowance of S\$6,000 • S\$2,800 annual accommodation allowance if scholar is staying on campus • Guaranteed offer of on-campus accommodation (excluding Residential Colleges or University Town) for first two years of undergraduate studies • Guaranteed placement for a 1-semester overseas Student Exchange Programme Bond Duration: Bond-free	• Singaporean Citizens • Strong leadership qualities and potential • Good co-curricular activities record, particularly in sports • Offered GCE 'A' Levels, Diploma from a polytechnic in Singapore or equivalent qualifications (e.g. International Baccalaureate/ NUS High School Diploma)
NUS Performing & Visual Arts Scholarship	Any full-time undergraduate course leading to a first degree, except Music and Yale-NUS College	• Full subsidy for tuition fees (after MOE Tuition Grant subsidy) • Annual living allowance of S\$6,000 • S\$2,800 annual accommodation allowance if scholar is staying on campus • Guaranteed offer of on-campus accommodation (excluding Residential Colleges or University Town) for first two years of undergraduate studies • Guaranteed placement for a 1-semester overseas Student Exchange Programme Bond Duration: Bond-free	• Singaporean Citizens • Strong leadership qualities and potential • Good co-curricular activities record, particularly in performing and/or visual arts • Offered GCE 'A' Levels, Diploma from a polytechnic in Singapore or equivalent qualifications (e.g. International Baccalaureate/ NUS High School Diploma)
NUS Science & Technology (S&T) Undergraduate Scholarship	A full-time Engineering/Computing/Science (excluding Pharmacy) undergraduate degree programme at NUS	• Full subsidy for tuition fees (after MOE Tuition Grant subsidy) • Annual living allowance of S\$6,000 • One-time settling-in allowance of S\$200 • Annual accommodation allowance equivalent to the lowest double room rate for on-campus accommodation • One-way air passage from home country to Singapore at the beginning of the course of study, and return air passage from Singapore to home country at the end of the course Bond Duration: Six-year bond with a Singapore-registered company immediately upon graduation	• Citizens of an Asian country • Strong leadership qualities and potential • Good co-curricular activities records • Possess outstanding high school results
NUS ASEAN Undergraduate Scholarship (AUS)	Any full-time undergraduate course leading to a first degree, except Music and Yale-NUS College	• Full subsidy for tuition fees (after MOE Tuition Grant subsidy) • Annual living allowance of S\$5,800 Bond Duration: While there is no bond attached to the scholarship, students are required to take up the MOE Tuition Grant to receive the scholarship, which comes with a 3-year bond	• Citizens of an ASEAN member country, excluding Singapore • Strong leadership qualities and potential • Good co-curricular activities records • Possess outstanding high school results
University Engineering Scholarship (UES)	A full-time Engineering/Computing undergraduate degree programme at NUS, a full-time Engineering/Technology programme at NTU, a full-time Engineering/Technology/Science programme at SIT or a full-time Engineering/Technology programme at SUTD	• Full subsidy for tuition fees (after MOE Tuition Grant subsidy) • Annual living allowance of S\$5,800 • One-time computer allowance of S\$2000 Bond Duration: Four-year bond working in an Engineering-related field in Singapore immediately upon graduation	• Singaporean Citizens or Singapore Permanent Residents • Possess outstanding local polytechnic diploma (preferably Diploma with Merit) • Be matriculating into a full-time Engineering/Computing undergraduate degree programme at NUS, a full-time Engineering/Technology programme at NTU, a full-time Engineering/Technology/Science programme at SIT or a full-time Engineering/Technology programme at SUTD
Lee Kuan Yew Scholarship to Encourage Upgrading (LKY-STEP) Award	A full-time undergraduate degree programme at NUS, NTU, SIT, SMU and SUTD	• One-time cash award of S\$3,500	• Singaporean Citizens or Singapore Permanent Residents • Good co-curricular activities record • Possess outstanding local polytechnic diploma (preferably Diploma with Merit) • Be matriculating into a full-time undergraduate degree programme at NUS/NTU/SIT/SMU/SUTD in the year of application
Stephen Riady Young Entrepreneur Scholarship	Any full-time undergraduate course leading to a first degree, except Dentistry, Medicine, Music and Yale-NUS College	• Full subsidy for tuition fees (after MOE Tuition Grant subsidy) • Annual living allowance of S\$6,000 • One-time computer allowance of S\$2,000 • Guaranteed offer of on-campus accommodation (excluding the Residential Colleges or University Town) for first two years of undergraduate studies • Guaranteed placement for a 1-semester overseas Student Exchange Programme • Guaranteed placement in the NUS Overseas Colleges ("NOC") internship programme • Eligible for up to S\$50,000 seed funding to start one business venture within six months of graduation Bond Duration: Bond-free	• Singaporean Citizens • Strong leadership qualities and potential • Good co-curricular activities record • Offered GCE 'A' Levels, Diploma from a polytechnic in Singapore or equivalent qualifications (e.g. International Baccalaureate/ NUS High School Diploma)
Wee Cho Yaw Future Leaders Award	Any full-time undergraduate course leading to a first degree, except Yale-NUS College	• Full subsidy for tuition fees (after MOE Tuition Grant subsidy) • Annual living allowance of S\$6,000 • One-time computer allowance of S\$2,000 Bond Duration: Bond-free	• Singaporean Citizens • Strong leadership qualities and potential • Good co-curricular activities record • Offered GCE 'A' Levels, Diploma from a polytechnic in Singapore or equivalent qualifications (e.g. International Baccalaureate/ NUS High School Diploma)
SINGAPORE-INDUSTRY SCHOLARSHIP (SgIS)			
SgIS Full-Term	COURSES Dependent on sponsoring organisations' requirements. Visit www.singaporeindustryscholarship.sg for the list of sponsored courses of study. • Nanyang Technological University (NTU) • National University of Singapore (NUS) • Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) • Singapore Management University (SMU) • Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS) • Singapore University of Technology & Design (SUTD)	• Full tuition fees and other approved academic charges • Maintenance and other allowances (e.g. books, computer) • Hostel allowance • Overseas exchange sponsorship (if requirements are met) Bond Duration: 3 years with Sponsoring Organisation (for SIT graduates) 4 years with Sponsoring Organisation (for NTU, NUS, SMU, SUSS and SUTD)	• Singapore Citizens • Recent graduates with good GCE 'A' Level certification (at least 10 academic units), International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma or Polytechnic Diploma • Good Co-curricular Activities (CCA) records • Passion to contribute to strategic sectors in Singapore. • Seeking admission or have been accepted for admission to the following institutions across all disciplines (excluding Medicine, Dentistry and other healthcare-related disciplines): - Nanyang Technological University (NTU) - National University of Singapore (NUS) - Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) - Singapore Management University (SMU) - Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS) - Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD)
SgIS Mid-Term Overseas	COURSES Dependent on sponsoring organisations' requirements. Visit www.singaporeindustryscholarship.sg for the list of sponsored courses of study. • Good reputable universities overseas.	Scholarship will be given in the form of a one-time grant as partial coverage for university related expenses. i) Applicants with more than 2 academic years remaining in university at time of application - SGD 60,000 ii) Applicants with 1 to 2 academic years remaining in university at time of application - SGD 40,000	• Singapore Citizens • Have completed at least 1 academic semester in overseas university and have not embarked on final year of study at point of application • Good undergraduate results across all disciplines (excluding Medicine, Dentistry and other healthcare-related disciplines) from overseas universities • Good Co-curricular Activities (CCA) records • Passion to contribute to strategic sectors in Singapore.
SgIS Mid-Term Local	COURSES Dependent on sponsoring organisations' requirements. Visit www.singaporeindustryscholarship.sg for the list of sponsored courses of study. • Nanyang Technological University (NTU) • National University of Singapore (NUS) • Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) • Singapore Management University (SMU) • Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS) • Singapore University of Technology & Design (SUTD)	Scholarship will be given in the form of a one-time grant as partial coverage for university related expenses. i) Applicants with at least 1 academic year remaining in university at time of application - SGD 30,000 ii) Applicants with 1 to 2 academic years remaining in university at time of application - SGD 50,000	• Singapore Citizens • Have completed at least 1 academic semester in local university (as per SgIS Full-Term) and have not embarked on final year of study at point of application • Good undergraduate results across all disciplines (excluding Medicine, Dentistry and other healthcare-related disciplines) • Good Co-curricular Activities (CCA) records • Passion to contribute to strategic sectors in Singapore.
SINGAPORE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (SIT)			
SIT Scholarship	All programmes at SIT	• Tuition fees based on the prevailing cost of the degree programme for Singapore Citizens • Other miscellaneous fees Bond Duration: NIL	• Be Singapore Citizens, or Singapore Permanent Resident • Outstanding academic results • Possess strong leadership qualities and potential • Have a good co-curricular activities record
SIT Mid Term Scholarship	All programmes at SIT	• Remaining tuition fees based on the prevailing cost of the degree programme for Singapore Citizens and other miscellaneous fees Bond Duration: NIL	• Be Singapore Citizens, or Singapore Permanent Residents • Achieve outstanding academic results • Possess strong leadership qualities and potential • Have a good co-curricular activities record • Completed a minimum of 60 credits in an SIT conferred degree programme or joint degree programme
SINGAPORE PRESS HOLDINGS (SPH)			
SPH Journalism Scholarship - Undergraduate Scholarship (Local/ Overseas) - Mid-Term Scholarship (Local/ Overseas)	Any discipline except Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Architecture & Law	Overseas • Tuition and compulsory fees • Maintenance allowance • Pre Studies Allowance • Return airfare Local • Tuition and compulsory fees • Maintenance allowance • Pre Studies Allowance Bond Duration: Depending on the value of the scholarship	• A greatly inquisitive mind, a passion to bring the truth to the forefront and an aptitude to bring news to life • Outstanding academic profiles • Impressive record of co-curricular activities • Strong language skills (English, Chinese, Malay or Tamil)

